THE

YOUNG WIDOW;

OR THE

HISTORY

OF

CORNELIA SEDLEY.

VOLUME II.

BRITISH MUSEUM
30
70
APR

THE

YOUNG WIDOW;

OR THE

HISTORY

OF

CORNELIA SEDLEY,

IN A SERIES OF LETTERS.

Non per elezion, ma per destino.

PETARCH.

VOLUME II.

DUBLIN:

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CORNELIA, &c.

LETTER I.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

I AM ſorry you have been ſo alarmed for the dear bachelor; and give you both joy and praiſe, my good girl, for having nurſed him once more into his uſual ſaucy health. Behold us all happily arrived at Audley-Grove, where the gay Louiſa was ready and delighted to receive us. She is wonderfully improved, ſince we ſaw her laſt, in ſtature, beauty, and ſenſe—but more of her in her turn; I have a thouſand things to talk of firſt. I ſhall not waſte my paper in telling you what a fine numerous cavalcade we formed in returning hither, nor what a graceful figure our lovely widow made on her beautiful Portugueze palfrey. No, my dear, not a word of all this. I muſt begin like a true mother, by

talking of my chits, and telling you, that your little nameſake, and Charles, and William, are all highly pleaſed, as we are, with the Monſons, our new governor and governeſs, who came hither in our party, and are very ſoon to be ſettled in the white farm-houſe lately incloſed within the park, where the little folks under their care are to reſide. But methinks I hear you cry, Piſh! why does ſhe begin talking to me of the brats, who are all well, when I am dying to hear of the poor Cornelia, who is "perplexed in the extreme?"

Would I could ſay that our gentle friend enjoys, as our aſſociated children do (for her little ones are here),

> "The thoughtleſs day, the eaſy night,
> The ſpirits pure, the ſlumbers light!"

But, alas! I perceive too clearly, that her tender boſom is becoming the victim of "the fury-paſſions." I may with too much propriety ſpeak of them in the plural number; for, by a little incident which I will tell you preſently, you will find that ſhe is tormented by more than one; and that Jealouſy has added new ſtings to diſcontented and ſelf tormenting Love. I ſee, my dear Lucy, that you begin to form a hundred ſurmiſes, and want to aſk me a hundred queſtions. What! (I hear you exclaim) is the romantic Seymour ſo fickle? Is he really captivated by the girliſh bloom of Louiſa? Patience my good girl; it is not fair, when you get a new play in your hand, to peep at the laſt act before you have well finiſhed the firſt. Allow me to proceed in my own way, and I will ſoon

make

make you better acquainted with all the characters and conduct of our buſy drama: which is to end, I hope, according to the good old eſtabliſhed cuſtom, with a happy marriage.—Firſt then for our heroine, our dear Cornelia: there is an air of deep dejection fixing itſelf on her features (in ſpite of all our attempts to diſperſe it) which alarms me much. She is even melancholy in the preſence of Seymour; and much more ſo when he is out of her ſight: yet ſhe has ſuch a dread of paſſing a few minutes alone with him, that ſhe conjures me to watch over her inceſſantly, and never allow him an opportunity of ſpeaking to her in private. But my good man, though he has not made him a convert, as I moſt devoutly hoped he would, has yet made him ſo tractable, and ſo willing to beſtow a religious education on the children that Cornelia has, and may have, that I am in great hopes their deſirable union may, in due time, be happily accompliſhed, in ſpite of the dear raſh creature's too righteous vow on the fatal night that I deſcribed to you. This cruel vow preſſes like an engine of torture on her heart. She frequently ſays to me, that their marriage muſt never take place; but ſhe ſays this with ſuch a voice, and ſuch a countenance, as convince me that, if it does not, her health and peace are utterly ruined for ever. I have not mentioned a word of this diſtreſſing vow to Seymour; and indeed I would not have him know of it for the world, eſpecially juſt now, when I have brought his turbulent ſpirits to a moſt comfortable calm. I flatter myſelf that I am his favourite confidante; and, by telling him no more than literal truth on the various little

proofs of Cornelia's entire affection for him, I have brought him to make me a promiſe very eſſential to our preſent tranquillity; and this is, not to addreſs a ſyllable concerning marriage to her, till the year of her widowhood is expired. In the mean time, it will be the great object of us all to calm her agitated ſpirits by every thing that can divert and amuſe her. I was in great hopes that my lively niece Louiſa might be of great uſe to us in this friendly purpoſe! but, alas! how frequently does pain flow from thoſe ſources whence we expect only pleaſure! Now, Lucy, you ſhall have the incident I promiſed; but firſt I muſt give you a little deſcription of the charming girl, whom you have not ſeen ſince ſhe was a mere child. Though ſhe was always a beautiful child, ſhe has now, I think, ſtill more beauty than her infancy promiſed, and will, I preſume, be reckoned much handſomer than our admired Cornelia herſelf, by all men who prefer a lively countenance to a tender one. They are exactly of the ſame height; and Louiſa, with the elegant ſhape of our friend, has a ſmiling ſet of features, that ſeem to ſay there is no ſuch thing as ſorrow in the world. Happily, indeed, it has hitherto been as much a ſtranger to her as if it did not exiſt; and as to the ſolicitudes of Love, you will gueſs what experience ſhe has of them, when I tell you ſhe has yet found them only fit ſubjects for laughter.

I never ſee our tender widow and this ſprightly girl together, but I have the two following lines of Shakſpeare at the end of my tongue:

though

though I muſt confeſs my application of them appears rather cruel,

"Why let the ſtricken deer go weep,
The hart ungall'd may play."

To play, indeed, from morning to night ſeems the ruling propenſity of Louiſa. Beſides ſinging ſprightly ſongs with great humour and pleaſantry, this laughter-loving gypſey is a moſt admirable mimic. She half-delighted and half-provoked me and Caroline yeſterday, by taking off what ſhe calls the impaſſioned langour of the widow and the ſolemn ſympathy of Seymour: ſhe is, however, much too delicate and well-bred to attempt any thing of this kind in the preſence of Cornelia; but when my huſband and Seymour have got the ſaucy arch girl to themſelves, ſhe does not ſpare the inamorato, as I learn from a ſcene that paſſed yeſterday in the garden, and produced a very ſingular effect within doors, though at the moment it eſcaped my obſervation.

It happened that I and Caroline (I cannot yet familiarize myſelf to the formal ſound of Mrs. Monſon) were ſtanding to chat with Cornelia at her toilet. The windows of her dreſſing-room, you know, have a perfect command of the new terrace where Louiſa, I find was ſauntering, in one of her gayeſt moods, between the two gentlemen. As I chanced to turn my back to the window, I had not perceived the party in the garden, and had indeed my eyes and attention fully engaged by the features and dreſs of our lovely friend; who, between ourſelves, appears to me a little more curious in

ſetting her cap than ſhe uſed to be before the arrival of my niece. She had borrowed Caroline's aſſiſtance to adjuſt ſome feathers after the Spaniſh faſhion; and, while they were both thus engaged, I was ſuddenly alarmed by ſeeing Cornelia turn as pale as death; a cold trembling ſeized her whole frame, and all the lovelineſs of her ſweet countenance was loſt in a ſtrange expreſſion of deſponding wretchedneſs, or rather of lifeleſs vacancy. Not ſuſpecting the real ſource of her diſorder, and apprehenſive that ſhe was on the point of falling into a fainting fit from mere weakneſs of body, I led her to the ſopha, and was very buſy with my bottle of hartſhorn. The moment I had placed her in a poſture of eaſe and quiet, ſhe was relieved by a violent burſt of tears; and preſſing my hand, ſhe ſaid, in a broken voice, "Be not ſo terrified, my dear Harriot: I have no malady to ſtruggle with, but my own folly; and I ſhall ſubdue that preſently, if you and Caroline will have the goodneſs to leave me for a few minutes alone." Unwilling as I was to quit her, I did not heſitate to comply with her requeſt, becauſe I perceived, by the looks of Caroline, that ſhe had ſome thoughts on the occaſion that ſhe wiſhed to communicate in private.—— We accordingly withdrew together; and the moment we got into my room, "For Heaven's ſake, my dear Caroline, ſaid I, can you account for all this?" "Oh, Madam, replied the warm-hearted and grateful Caroline, ſhe muſt, indeed ſhe muſt, be the wife of Mr. Seymour; pray do not let Mr. Audley oppoſe it; I would venture my life on their being happy together. Though Mr. Seymour it not quite ſo devout as he

he ſhould be, yet he has a thouſand noble virtues; and ſhe loves him to diſtraction." "I think with you entirely, my dear Caroline, I replied; but this is no anſwer to my queſtion: I thought by your manner that you had diſcovered the immediate cauſe of my poor friend's agitation." "Diſcovered it! cried Caroline, Ah, Madam, you would have ſeen it plain enough, if you had caſt an eye towards the window at the moment that Mrs. Sedley and I happened to do ſo. Poor lady! ſhe is far gone indeed; but, I believe, in her caſe I ſhould have been affected as much." "Affected at what! dear Caroline, don't torture my curioſity ſo barbarouſly. For heaven's ſake what did you ſee?" "Nothing, madam, but an idle frolic of Mr. Seymour with Miſs Louiſa. She had provoked him, I ſuppoſe, by mimicking the poor lady who doats on him; how that might be I can't tell; but juſt as Mrs. Sedley turned ſo ſick, I happened to ſpy Mr. Seymour catching hold of Miſs Louiſa, who had tried to run from him, and kiſſing her moſt unmercifully." "Poor Cornelia! I exclaimed with a ſigh, can a ſight like this affect thee ſo woefully! Well, my good Caroline, I continued, pray do not mention a ſyllable of this idle affair to any creature except your huſband. I will inſtantly return to my poor friend, and ſee if ſhe has honeſty, or rather ſtrength enough, to avow to me of her own accord the real cauſe of her ſuffering." I found Cornelia greatly recovered, yet ſo anxious to evade all diſcourſe that might lead to an explanation of what had paſſed, that from a ſincere deſire not to diſtreſs her tender ſpirits, I ſacrificed my deſign of leading her to a full confeſ-

ſion. Yet, to ſhew to what an uncommon degree of amiable ingenuouſneſs reigns in the heart of this admirable creature, I muſt tell you how ſhe behaved to me on our retiring at night: ſhe took me to her own chamber, and ſending away her ſervant, began to apologize for her reſerve towards me before dinner. "I feel that I am guilty of ingratitude, my dear Harriot, ſaid this tendereſt of friends, in attempting to conceal any exceſſes of my folly from you, whoſe indulgence, and whoſe zeal to comfort me, have ever kept pace with my hapleſs propenſity to torment myſelf. To-day, indeed, I was aſhamed to confeſs my extreme weakneſs to you in the moment; perhaps our gentle Caroline, who perceived it all, though ſhe was too delicate to utter a ſyllable before me that proved her conſcious of my folly, perhaps Caroline has explained to you all the myſtery of my fooliſh agitation. Ah! my too indulgent Harriot, to what an extravagant and ſilly pitch of fondneſs have you raiſed my dangerous partiality for a man to whom I muſt never be united! My reaſon tells me ſufficiently that I have no right to be jealous of him; yet I cannot behold him careſſing even your niece Louiſa, in a romping frolic, without ſuch wretched and unjuſtifiable ſenſations as I am ready to deteſt, and deſpiſe my own heart for feeling. I did not think that any human boſom could be ſo very weak and unjuſt; and much leſs did I ſuſpect myſelf to be capable of the extreme weakneſs and injuſtice which I am now deploring; but ſince it is ſo, my dear Harriot, pray contrive for me to make a decent retreat to-morrow to my own quiet manſion; and inſtead of encouraging"——

I heard

I heard the tender ſoul with the moſt patient ſilence thus far; but here I could not refrain from entering into a very warm oppoſition, both to her ſentiments and her project of retiring from our party. We had a curious diſſertation on the paſſion of jealouſy, in which I affirmed, that a woman never feels it ſo painfully, as when ſhe fancies ſhe has no right to feel it at all. We ran over all the old and new ground of argument for and againſt Seymour; in ſhort, we ſpent half the night in a very diverſified converſation, during which I laughed and wept, and ſcolded and ſoothed our dear ſelf-torturing friend alternately, till at laſt I left her a little reconciled both to herſelf and her lover. In wiſhing her a good night I added a ſaucy declaration, that I ſhould act as queen in my own caſtle; that if ſhe talked again of removing, I ſhould iſſue an order for her cloſe confinement; and publiſh an edict at the ſame time, in which Seymour ſhould be threatened with inſtant death if he was ſeen to touch any lips but her own.

Thus, my dear Lucy, by a mixture of ſeriouſneſs and ſport, I endeavour to preſerve the mind of our gentle friend from purſuing any immediate and deſperate reſolution that might prove fatal to her future peace. Would to Heaven I could as eaſily remove Seymour's diſtreſſing infidelity in religion as I can annihilate the vehement reſolves which poor Cornelia will ſometimes utter of renouncing his ſociety for ever! My huſband encourages me to hope that time may do much in promoting the happineſs of this intereſting couple, if we can but prevent the eagerneſs of Love on one ſide, and of Fear

on the other, from taking any precipitate meaſures to accelerate or preclude their union. He wiſhes to keep them for a few months in an abſolute neutrality. But this is a project which even his friendly zeal, and his perſuaſive addreſs, will hardly be able to accompliſh. We cannot utterly change the diſpoſitions of Nature. Love, in a boſom like Seymour's, will be impetuous; and Terror, in a frame like Cornelia's, will be precipitate. For my part, I ſhould not be ſurprized if our dear conſcientious friend ſhould be terrified ſtill more than ſhe is, by a viſion of the poor departed Sedley, and ſhould ſteal away from us in the night. The conflict of the various paſſions that agitate her mind is truly pitiable; and at the very moment when I attempt to relieve her by laughing at her perplexities, my heart inwardly bleeds for the anguiſh of hers. Yet perhaps ſhe ſays truly, my dear Lucy, that you, from the peculiar incidents of your paſt life, are more able to enter into her preſent feelings than I am. From this idea ſhe will have great ſatisfaction in unburthening her full ſoul to you; and as you will certainly have a letter from her very ſoon, you will the more readily allow me to cloſe this long pacquet. Pray tell our dear Edmund that we think a change of air would have ſecured him from a relapſe, and that we wiſh him to take that precaution againſt a ſecond. Cannot you make it ſuit you both to come to us at this critical time; when the ſage Edmund might prove a very uſeful Mentor to our young Telemachus, not in driving him away from the enjoyments of Love, but in teaching him how to ſecure them? If, however, we muſt not expect

pect the pleaſure of adding you to our party, as I fear we muſt not; be aſſured that I ſhall ſend you quick tidings of every intereſting occurrence relative to the great object of our general ſolicitude. Louiſa longs to renew her acquaintance with you, and unites her kind wiſhes to thoſe of

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

LETTER II.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

IF you wiſh, my dear Edmund, to be pleaſantly laughed out of all the ſingularities belonging to the condition of a confirmed bachelor, aye, and out of the condition itſelf, let me adviſe you to haſten hither. Here have we a pretty madcap from Ireland, whoſe magical powers are ſtrong enough, I believe, to metamorphoſe the ſtiffeſt advocate for a ſingle life into

into the ſuppleſt of all ſupple creatures, an uxorious and contented huſband. In ſerious truth, our young Louiſa is a moſt lovely girl, and playful as the air which ſports with every feather that flies acroſs it. How it would delight me to ſee our dear diſcreet Edmond moſt profoundly in love with this ſweet ſportive damſel! By Heaven, ſhe has all the vivacity and frolic of your Sylvia, with good-nature and innocence into the bargain. She is the richeſt antidote that Nature can furniſh you with againſt thoſe poiſonous vapours of ſpleen and timidity which you ſometimes feel and lament, and which ſeldom fail, I believe, to infeſt the ſingle in the latter ſtages of life. She is the very thing for you; perfectly qualified, though a child of Nature, to reliſh your wit, and to repay you for it, by a lighter and more copious coin of her own. Why, man, ſhe would deſtroy all your troubleſome doubts, ſcruples, and depreſſions, as St. Patrick deſtroyed the rats of her country by rhyming them to death. She will ſpout you verſes like a young prieſteſs of Apollo; yet the lovely creature has not an atom of pedantry or affectation about her; ſhe has, however, the dangerous diverting talent of mimickry to perfection. If my love to Cornelia had not been thoroughly rooted in my heart, I believe this gay gypſey would have beat it out of my boſom, by the mere force of her wit and humour. She took me off, the other day, as we were ſtrolling, with only your brother, in the garden, with ſuch provoking powers of ridicule, that, having little to ſay in my defence, I was forced to take vengeance on her lips. I believe ſhe will not ſpeedily renew the provocation; for, ſeizing her with all my force, I not only

only kiſſed her without mercy, but refuſed to releaſe her till ſhe, in her turn, beſtowed a few kiſſes on me; and the warm luxuriant creature

"Did it with a prudency ſo roſy, the ſweet view on't
Might well have warm'd old Saturn."

"Theſe are dangerous frolicks, Seymour, very dangerous indeed." This, I know, will be the exclamation of my dear timid monitor in peruſing this little anecdote; and dangerous, I grant you, my good man of caution, ſuch a frolic might be, had your ſerious worſhip been in my place. Had your ſolidity ventured ſo near as I did to this flaming beauty, I am confident ſhe would have ſet you in a blaze; but I bear a charmed heart. The image of my lovely widow is ſo magically engraven there, that no other enchantreſs has power to affect it. As to that danger which you, in the friendly abundance of your fears, have apprehended for the damſel herſelf, believe me, ſhe is perfectly ſecure. Louiſa is one of thoſe happy girls whoſe ſenſe and ſpirit enable them to jeſt, and even to romp, without endangering the freedom of their affections, and the delicacy of their character; or, as you will ſay of her when you are as much in love with this lively charmer as I wiſh you to be, ſhe is a Venus, who can ſport with Momus, without forgetting that ſhe is the Queen of the Graces. And now, though you have not ſeen her, I underſtand, ſince ſhe was an infant, I ſhall deem you a very barbarous fellow if you do not inſtantly fall in love with her upon my ſuggeſtion; eſpecially as I have actually opened the campaign as your aid-du-

camp,

camp, and have laid ſtrong ſiege to her heart in your name: I may venture to add, that I have made conſiderable advances in this exploit; ſo pray hear what they are. Firſt, I have made her intimately acquainted with all your virtues, talents, and perfections; but this is the leaſt important part of my ſervice; my capital ſtroke in your favour is the following. Secondly, I have made her equally acquainted with your oddities and foibles. A pretty method (you will ſay) of ſerving a friend. But hear me out, Edmund. In making her thus intimately acquainted with your oddities and foibles, I have ſhewn her, at the ſame time, how exactly ſuited her own charms and accompliſhments are to correct, improve, and make you a perfect creature. This I have done for you, my dear diffident philoſopher; and I defy you, after all your profound meditations on the virtues and caprices of the fair ſex, to point out to me any conduct by which I could more effectually create for you a tender intereſt in the boſom of the lady. Though you are often a champion for the fair, I believe in your private thoughts you do not think ſo highly of women as I do. For my own part, I am perſuaded that a young, artleſs, ſenſible, inexperienced woman, is generally actuated by a ſincere and ardent deſire to make her own tender virtues of real utility to the world. This, by the way, will explain the reaſon why ſo many of this deſcription have married in the hope of reforming a rake. It is not, as the vulgar phraſe will have it, that women love to ſee a ſpice of the devil in man, or that they have a vain confidence in their own perſonal attractions; no, it is becauſe nothing is ſo bewitching to a virtuous mind without experience,

perience, as the expectation of rendering its own virtue an inſtrument of good.

But what a ſad pedantic varlet am I growing, to run on in this fine moral diſſertation upon you and your laughing Louiſa (for ſhe muſt be yours), without beſtowing a ſyllable on my pale, penſive, perplexed, yet adorable and faithfully adored Cornelia! But here comes my youngeſt female monitor, my little Mentor in petticoats, the grateful Caroline; who has juſt entered my room to fulfil her promiſe of indulging me in a long private conference, in which I have a million of queſtions to aſk. By the arch ſmile on her countenance ſhe has ſome pleaſant tidings to give me concerning my idol; but, as ſhe tells me the courier of the houſe is waiting for this letter, I muſt reſerve her good news to enliven my next. At preſent you have food enough for your imagination and your heart, in what I have ſaid of Louiſa.—So good digeſtion wait on appetite, and health on both!

Ever your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER III.

FROM CORNELIA TO LUCY AUDLEY.

IT is from you alone, my dear Lucy, that I can expect perfect ſympathy and compaſſion for the various agitations of heart and mind which I continually endure. Though our excellent Harriot has certainly one of the tendereſt hearts in the world, and is all kindneſs to me; yet having known, in her own happy lot, nothing but the felicity of a moſt fortunate affection, ſhe cannot thoroughly enter into all the diverſified wretchedneſs ariſing from a paſſion that we can neither renounce nor ſubdue. You, my dear girl, have paſſed through the fiery ordeal, which is now conſuming my peace, and perhaps ſome portion of my integrity; for I fear I am acting very wrong, in ſpite of all that our too indulgent Harriot alledges in my defence, to remain here in the ſociety of a faſcinating creature, from whom I ought, I think, both for his ſake and my own, to hide myſelf for ever. But I will unburthen my full boſom to you, my dear Lucy, and lay my whole ſoul before you, in the hope that your experience, as well as your tenderneſs, may miniſter in ſome degree to my relief.

You

You have known, my good girl, what it is to love in ſpite of reaſon, and without a hope of being united to the object of your regard. Ah, my dear Lucy, how ſincerely do I admire that nobleneſs of ſpirit with which you have finally triumphed over feelings that ſeem to annihilate the beſt faculties of the mind! But your candour will allow that you had one great advantage which I am very far from poſſeſſing: in diſcovering the baſeneſs of the man who had artfully engaged your affections, you had an opportunity of ſummoning your pride to your ſupport:

"Your bane and antidote were both before you."

But, alas, the caſe is far otherwiſe with me! "The gallant, the princely Seymour," to give him the titles conferred on him by yourſelf, has, I find, no qualities (as you have often told me when arguing in his favour) "to awaken either contempt or indifference; and to love him once, is to love him for ever." How often, my dear friend, has that forcible expreſſion of yours recurred upon my heart! and how many wonderful occurrences, ſince you and I parted, have conſpired to make me feel the truth of it as I do at this moment; but, while I am thoroughly convinced that my affection for him is become a part of my exiſtence, I feel with equal conviction the cruel neceſſity if rejecting him as a huſband. Why am I here then in his company? Why do I linger thus, like a guilty ghoſt, in a ſcene that I ought and wiſh to abandon? Ah, my dear Lucy, if you could ſee how pale and thin your poor Cornelia is grown, you would not think the word *ghoſt* miſapplied; and that I

am

am in ſome degree guilty, my conſcience tells me every hour; for, by ſtaying here, I ſeem to practiſe an ungenerous deceit towards Seymour, and may lead him perhaps to cheriſh a diſtant hope of accompliſhing what never muſt come to paſs. Why, then, do I ſtay? Why, truly, becauſe your good brother and ſiſter will have it ſo. They would perſuade me, that time may do wonders in removing the great and only obſtacle to this much-deſired, yet impoſſible, union. Your brother, this very morning, refuſed to hear a petition that I attempted to make to him, for leave to depart; and turned from me, with the following parody on a couplet of Gray's:

"Love yet may make an unbeliever wife,
And goſpel-light dawn from Cornelia's eyes."

Ah, my dear Lucy, I will confeſs to you there are times when this tranſporting idea takes full poſſeſſion of my ſoul. When I fondly imagine myſelf deſtined by Heaven to reſcue the generous Seymour from the vain illuſions and arrogant ſophiſtry of the world, and to make him a true ſervant of that Divine Maſter whoſe laws are ſo conſonant to the purity and the benevolence of his heart, how exquiſite is the delight of this heavenly idea! With what enthuſiaſtic tranſport have I frequently in my own mind applied to Seymour and myſelf the following charming lines from the Royal Convert of Rowe:

"My Life! my Lord!
What would my heart ſay to thee?
Oh, lift thy eyes up to that holy Power
Whoſe wondrous truths and Majeſty divine

Thy

Thy Ethelinda taught thee firſt to know!
There fix thy faith, and triumph o'er the world;
For who can help, or who can ſave beſides?"

Yet, in ſpite of this holy fortitude and fervor, which ſeem in ſome of my private moments to render me a new and more exalted being, I ſoon relapſe again into my poor trembling ſelf. Though I feel, at times, as if I had ſufficient powers of language and reaſoning to produce a total and immediate change in the religious ſentiments of Seymour; and though I love him with ſo pure and diſintereſted a paſſion that I would moſt willingly ſacrifice my life to enſure his converſion; yet ſuch a poor, weak wretch am I, my dear Lucy, by nature, that I dare not even utter a ſyllable to him on the ſubject of Religion; and a cold involuntary tremor runs through my whole frame, if the converſation ſeems to be taking that turn, whenever we are in company together. Still our dear encouraging Harriot would induce me to hope that the mild engaging piety of her huſband, and his conciliating manners, united to the ſecret influence of Love, may gradually accompliſh what I have not faculties to attempt, and give to us at laſt the happy convert that we ſo ardently wiſh to behold. "Why ſhould we deſpair, ſays this indulgent friend and moſt indefatigable of advocates, why ſhould we deſpair of ſeeing a candid, a magnanimous young man relinquiſh the accidental prejudice of his youth? If Seymour were one of thoſe lawleſs libertines who abhor, in the Goſpel, an inſupportable curb to their ſenſual and imperious paſſions; or if he were one of thoſe cold-hearted and arrogant

gant ſophiſts who deride every thing that does not ſquare with their own infallible reaſon; we might indeed deſpair of his converſion. But Seymour is a character very different from theſe. In embracing the law of Chriſt, he will ſubject himſelf to no reſtraint from which his heart can feel a wiſh to revolt: on the contrary, he will ſecure to himſelf, by this meaſure, the only object of his paſſionate attachment." Ah, my dear Lucy, you, I am ſure, will forgive me, for liſtening ſometimes with the fondeſt credulity to theſe inſinuating arguments. Alas! how deeply am I puniſhed for that credulity, whenever my own poor wavering mind flies back again, as it frequently does, to the oppoſite perſuaſion! I then think myſelf the moſt culpable of creatures. I ſeem to have deſerted my prime duty to my dear children, by ſuffering myſelf to be thus more and more entangled in a connexion, which might ultimately lead me to violate the dying injunction of their father, and expoſe them to the worſt of evils. But no, my dear Lucy, this ſhall never be. I have taken a moſt ſacred oath, as Harriot has told you, that I will never be the wife of an infidel. Seymour is too noble to delude me with hypocriſy; and whatever diſtiny may await me, I am ſecure againſt this deepeſt of calamities. Why, then, am I tormented with ſuch a dread and horror of what never can befall me? For, O, my dear friend, I am tormented to a degree that I can hardly impart, without a ſcruple, to your tender boſom. I know how you will feel for me, when I tell you (what I have not confeſſed to Harriot) that I am haunted by viſions which almoſt freeze my blood, and render me an ob-

ject

ject of deteſtation to myſelf. You will ſuppoſe I am perſecuted in my dreams by the image of the poor departed Sedley: but it is not ſo; to my great ſurpriſe, I have never dreamt of him in all my preſent agitation of ſpirits. No; my viſions are much more horrid, for I have dreamed that my exceſſive paſſion for Seymour had annihilated all my natural affection for my children. O GOD! my dear Lucy, this is a horror of which you can form no adequate conception. I had hardly cloſed my eyes laſt night when I ſeemed to behold the miſery of my alienated children. I heard William ſhriek out, to the poor little affrighted Charles, "Our mother is turned into a treacherous friend!" Their looks of terror and abhorrence pierced me to the ſoul. I ſtrove to convince them of my fondneſs; the poor bewildered innocents fled from me. I purſued them through innumerable difficulties; till at laſt I awoke in a burſt of convulſive anguiſh, and found myſelf actually kneeling and weeping over the little bed in my chamber where the two dear boys were happily aſleep. At firſt I could hardly believe my own happineſs, in finding them ſo tranquil; and I took the light which I always burn in my room to convince myſelf of its truth, by a full ſurvey of their ſweet little placid features. The contraſt of their ſoft delicious ſlumber, and the agony which I had dreamed they were ſuffering, threw me into freſh floods of tears. In retiring to my own pillow, I addreſſed a moſt ardent prayer to Heaven, not only to preſerve theſe dear infants from all the evil which my weakneſs might draw upon them, but to deliver both myſelf and Seymour from this diſquieting paſ-

ſion.

ſion, which ſeems ſo likely to prove a misfortune to both. I am afraid you will think me hardly ſincere in this prayer; yet believe me, my dear friend, if I know my own heart and ſoul, I was ſo moſt truly. But to you, my dear Lucy, I ſhall not heſitate to confeſs, that the more I ſtruggle to free myſelf from this faſcinating attachment, the more I feel myſelf the ſlave of an unfortunate affection, which has ſo much to plead in its excuſe. My reaſon and my conſcience continually ſuggeſt to me that I am wrong; and there are times when I feel a ſort of hatred towards Seymour, for having led me to a ſtate of mind ſo full of pain and diſtreſs. Even in my private meditations my heart will often ſeem to ſhrink from him, and hold it as a crime even to think of his perfections. But theſe feelings are tranſient; and they are generally followed by ſuch a relapſe of tender paſſions, that I am ready to addreſs the image of this dear enemy to my peace in the words of Ethelinda:

"If thou art my offence, I've ſinn'd indeed,
Ev'n to a vaſt and numberleſs account;
For from the ſeaſon when I lov'd thee firſt
My ſoul has not one moment been without thee."

You, my dear friend, you and Harriot have been cruelly inſtrumental to my diſquietude and diſtreſs, by your well-intended, but fatal indulgence to me, at the early period of my attachment; when you ridiculed my honeſt endeavours to conceal and ſubdue my affection, when you delighted to fan the flame that I was vainly labouring to extinguiſh. Time and chance have conſpired ſtill more cruelly to give this moſt

moſt enchanting of men a dominion over my heart. I have a ſtrange mixture of pain and delight in reflecting on the great obligation that I owe him. He has indeed, as you have often ſaid of him, ſo many attractive accompliſhments and virtues, that it is hardly poſſible for any woman to ſee him frequently without feeling an affectionate admiration of his character. Surely no man ever poſſeſſed in ſo high a degree that rare union of tenderneſs and ſpirit which is ſo particularly engaging to our ſex, or ſuch admirable delicacy of manners, without a ſhadow of artifice or affectation. O Lucy, I could ſcribble a volume on the excellence and peculiarity of his attractions; but though his perfections will more than juſtify, my good girl, your ardent friendſhip for him, I feel that, great as they are, they cannot afford a ſufficient ſanction to my love. It is enough that my conſcience repeatedly informs me I muſt not indulge it. Conſcience, my good Lucy, is a much ſafer guide than Friendſhip herſelf, however zealous and enlightened; and when we act againſt the dictates of this internal monitor, even in points that ſeem hardly material, how deeply are we puniſhed! Alas, I am a ſad example how deeply I offended this inflexible judge, when I complied with the preſſing ſolicitations of our dear Harriot in attending her hither. What I have endured ſince I came under her friendly roof you may partly gueſs, from what I have told you already. But, alas! my dear Lucy, I have not yet told you all my weakneſſes or my ſufferings. You have probably heard what I allude to from our communicative Harriot, becauſe it was a weakneſs that I confeſſed

feſſed to her, and confiding in your kindneſs and ſecrecy, I lay her under no reſtraint in what ſhe ſays of me to you; yet her tenderneſs, perhaps, in this point, may have ſpared me. I will therefore be frank enough to tell you under my own hand, that I have within theſe few days been the weakeſt and moſt unjuſt of women; I have been fool enough to grow moſt abſurdly jealous of him whoſe addreſſes I had determined to reject. Oh, Lucy, I did not think there had been ſuch inconſiſtency in woman; much leſs in my own heart. You, I know, will rather pity than ridicule me, when I tell you that upon accidentally ſeeing Seymour careſſing our young Louiſa in a mere frolic, I felt as if my whole frame was ſhattered on the rack. Of all the ſenſations that I remember to have endured in my life, this, my dear friend, was the moſt hideouſly painful; it ſeemed as if my heart was abſolutely torn away from its ſeat, and there was nothing but drear vacuity in my boſom. Heaven have mercy upon the jealous, if ſuch are the tortures they endure! But my pain could not be owing to mere jealouſy; it was rather the effect of a ſudden ſurprize, upon nerves that have been dreadfully ſhaken. I think I could ſee the ſame thing again without feeling any emotion at the ſight; yet I will not pretend to more fortitude, or more juſtice, than I have. You have often very feelingly lamented your own weakneſs to me, my dear friend; and I am now abundantly returning your confidence. I have a double reaſon for thus unfolding to you every inſtance of my folly. Firſt, as proof of my perfect regard for you. Secondly, becauſe I hope, in thus ſhewing how thoroughly

roughly I am aware of my own infirmity, I may gain credit with you for the ſtrength and wiſdom that I mean to recover and exert. I have formed a plan, in my own mind, for my deliverance; upon which I am particularly ſolicitous to have your opinion, becauſe I think no one can enter into my feelings ſo thoroughly as yourſelf. Our dear Harriot, and her moſt friendly huſband, judge me too hardly, or rather too tenderly. From their eager wiſh to exempt me from pain, they ſuppoſe me unable to endure it; they both believe me ſo incurably enamoured of Seymour, that they think no event but our marriage can preſerve my exiſtence; but, weak as I feel and confeſs myſelf to be, I have ſtill, I am convinced, a ſtrength of ſpirit far ſuperior to what they imagine. Our dear and zealous Harriot is ſo vehement for this impoſſible marriage, that ſhe wants me to overlook the grand and inſuperable objection. She tells me, that I ought to be ſatisfied by ſuch conceſſions as Seymour, ſhe ſays, is very willing to make. That if I have the moſt unqueſtionable aſſurance that all my children ſhall be religiouſly educated in the Chriſtian Faith, and my own principles unmoleſted by oppoſition, I have no reaſon to diſturb myſelf concerning the private creed of my huſband. But, ſituated as I am, I feel it is my prime duty to regard the dying injunction of poor Sedley, and to maintain the voluntary oath which I was induced to take from an exceſs of anxiety for my children. I might indeed confide in any promiſe of Seymour's; for, ſtranger as he moſt unhappily is to the only true Religion, in all other points he is truth itſelf. If he gave his word to this arti-

cle, I can believe that he never would urge a ſingle argument, or attempt by ridicule to ſhake the faith of my children or of his own. But, if he did not poiſon their young minds by his doctrine, might he not miſlead them by his inſinuating example? Might he not induce even me to grow cold and negligent in the moſt important duty of life, and to relinquiſh imperceptibly the worſhip of my Redeemer? Yes, my dear friend, I will confeſs to you, that I could not promiſe for my own firmneſs, were I to place myſelf in ſo perilous a ſituation; even now I often contemplate the irreligion of the man I love in too favourable a light. I am too ready to ſay, like Zayre, in my favourite French play,

"Je le vois trop: les ſoins qu'on prend de notre enfance.
Forment nos ſentimens, nos mœurs, notre créance.
L'inſtruction fait tout; & la main de nos pères
Grave en nos foibles cœurs ces premiers caractéres,
Que l'exemple & le tems nous viennent retracer,
Et que peut-être en nous Dieu ſeul peut effacer."

"I ſee too plainly cuſtom forms us all;
Our thoughts, our morals, our moſt fix'd belief,
Are conſequences of our place of birth;
'Tis but inſtruction all—our parents hand
Writes on our heart the firſt faint characters,
Which time retracing deepens into ſtrength,
That nothing can efface but Death or Heav'n."
HILL's Zara.

By conſidering his infidelity as the natural conſequence of a faſhionable education, I frequently loſe all the horror with which it ought to inſpire me. I ſhould not be able perhaps to ſtruggle with this weakneſs of my heart and mind

mind ſo effectually as I now hope to do, had not the forcible admonitions of my dear Harriot's father awakened me to the fulleſt ſenſe of my dangers and my duty. Good daughter as ſhe is, ſhe could hardly forgive him for his vehemence againſt Seymour, in that diſtreſſed night of which ſhe ſays ſhe gave you a very minute deſcription; yet he certainly acted only the part that became him, as a friend and a divine. The more I reflect on the many ſtrong and juſt things he ſaid, the more I feel myſelf indebted to his virtue, and the more I hope to profit by his advice; though, as I have already confeſſed to you, there are times when it has not the ſlighteſt influence on my feelings. In my more diſcreet hours I endeavour to fortify my ſpirit by calling his very powerful lecture to my mind. One of his remarks made a very deep impreſſion upon me. In entering minutely into the character of Seymour, after doing full juſtice to his courage, his generoſity, and his engaging accompliſhments, he ſaid, "I will grant you, that he is a moſt delightful companion for your ſex at his preſent period of life; there is a vivacity and good-nature in youth that can hide all the hideouſneſs of impiety itſelf; but the main queſtion is, what ſort of a huſband will this man make towards the middle and latter end of his days, when his gaiety begins to languiſh, from the emptineſs of human pleaſures, and his lively temper is rendered more ſplenetic and imperious by the inevitable vexations of the world? Theſe are the trying ſeaſons of our exiſtence; and if he is deſtitute of Religion, as we know but too well he is, believe me he is deſtitute of every thing that

can tranquillize his own ſpirit at the period I am ſpeaking of, and enable him to diffuſe light and comfort to his domeſtic circle." I have given you, I believe, very near the exact words of my vehement and venerable counſellor; for, agitated as I was, every ſyllable that he uttered ſunk deep into my ſoul; and as there is, you know, a ſtrange ſpirit of contradiction in our nature, I believe I remember his expreſſions the more accurately, becauſe the too indulgent Harriot has wiſhed me to forget them: the laſt time that I recalled ſome of theſe to her recollection, ſhe was almoſt angry with me, and ſaid, in her ſpirited manner, that I ſhould realize the ſtory of the poor Lady Clementina, and drive myſelf quite out of my ſenſes by my religious ſcruples. But, as I told her in my reply our caſes are widely different; that enchanting character, whether true or ideal, had many circumſtances to diſtract her, from which I am happily exempt: ſhe was perſecuted by proud and imperious relations; the little difference between her own creed and that of Grandiſon was not ſufficiently viſible and weighty to make her mind clear and reſolute in her deciſion againſt him. Alas! how different is my caſe! I diſtinctly ſee my own duty; and I truſt I am now compleatly determined to fulfil it. I ſhall, however take a hint from the noble Clementina. I am ſtrongly inclined to ſolicit the well-known generoſity of my lover to ſupport me againſt himſelf. This, my dear Lucy, is the plan upon which I am anxious for your opinion. Our dear Harriot has very innocently increaſed my miſery, by her eagerneſs to relieve it; though I had not power to refuſe her preſſing intreaties,

intreaties, I am now too painfully convinced, by my own ſufferings, that I ought not to have made one of the party here. My peace is fled, and my health is waſting rapidly away. I have no chance of recovering a tolerable degree of quiet, but in a reſolute and haſty retreat to my own ſolitary manſion. I muſt take, however, my dear boys along with me; for all my force and fortitude originates in them. The Monſons, I know, will follow me with their other little pupils. In the grateful and ſenſible Caroline I have a valuable boſom-friend, moſt anxious for my laſting happineſs, though confeſſedly in the intereſt of her generous protector.

Our dear Harriot thinks me ſo totally unfit to be my own guide, that I know ſhe would not patiently hear of this project, neceſſary as I feel it is to my peace. I think, therefore, of accompliſhing my departure without her ſuſpecting it. All this I have ſettled in my own mind, and am much eaſier ſince I formed the reſolution. But now, my dear ſympathetic friend, decide for me the great point that perplexes me: ſhall I, or ſhall I not, leave a long letter for Seymour; unfolding moſt frankly to him all the painful paſt conflicts in my boſom; and conjuring him, by the ſincerity of that diſintereſted love which he profeſſes, to let me peaceably purſue the only line of conduct that can poſſibly ſecure to me the laſting approbation of my heart, and the tranquillity of my mind? I know, if I aſked Harriot the queſtion that I have now propoſed to you, my dear Lucy, ſhe would wickedly laugh in my face, and tell me, that the ardent imagination of Seymour would conſider ſuch an epiſtle as a delicate hint

to purſue me to Sedley-hall. But our ſprightly friend does not, I think, perfectly underſtand either Seymour or me. As to myſelf, I ſhould aſſuredly wiſh to be underſtood as literally ſincere in my requeſt; and I am willing to think that Seymour, with all his impetuous ſpirit, has too much penetration, and too much delicacy, to put ſo wrong a conſtruction on the language of a woman, when ſhe candidly reveals her whole ſoul to him without a ſhadow of reſerve. But tell me what you think; and tell me ſpeedily, my dear girl. Suppoſe yourſelf exactly in my ſituation, and tell me how you would act: yet you cannot do ſo completely; your imagination, lively and powerful as it is, cannot perfectly ſuggeſt to you all the ſtrong feelings of a mother ſituated as I am. But how many ſtriking circumſtances have I to impreſs upon my heart all the great duties of that important character! The extreme lovelineſs of my children, the dying requeſt of my poor Sedley, the admonitions of my own excellent father, who, delighting in the uncommon name that he gave me, uſed frequently to bid me remember that he gave it me, not becauſe it ſounded well, and was ſingular, but becauſe it had belonged to a Roman lady diſtinguiſhed by the luſtre of her maternal virtues, and becauſe he hoped that if Heaven bleſſed me with children, it might make me as attentive as ſhe was to the care of their education. O you benevolent ſpirits who were once on earth the kind monitors of your Cornelia, and are now perhaps looking down upon her from Heaven, I will not forget you, and the principles which you infuſed into my

ſoul

ſoul! I will baniſh all love from my boſom, but the love of thoſe dear little ones whom you commended to my care. I will live only for them. Write, and confirm me, my dear Lucy, in this only ſafe, this triumphant reſolution. No words can expreſs the relief that I have found already in thus pouring forth my whole heart to you. You will comprehend all its complicated emotions. You will compaſſionate all its weakneſs. You will rejoice in its reviving energy. You will applaud my conſcientious deciſion; and your applauſe will operate as a cordial on the ſtill trembling ſpirits of

Your moſt ſincere

and affectionate

CORNELIA.

P. S. Alas! what a poor ſlave am I to Time and Chance! Five minutes ago I was exulting in the cloſe of this immenſe pacquet, and in the comfort I anticipated from your expected anſwer; and now I have a great mind to throw all theſe cloſely-ſcribbled ſheets into the fire; for, behold, the great queſtion, on which I was ſo anxious to conſult you, is ſuddenly become no queſtion at all; my maid has juſt told me, that Mr. Seymour is going from us to-morrow. Ah, my dear Lucy, what a weak, what a deſpicable creature is your poor vaunting Cornelia! Though I had firmly reſolved to fly from him myſelf, I muſt own to you that I feel mortified to death by his thus retiring from me. Oh, abominable vanity! This is a weakneſs

that deſerves no quarter. But I truſt it is only the laſt fluttering momentary flame of an exhauſted fire, juſt on the point of extinction. Write to me—reprove me—comfort me—exhort and command me to ſtruggle and triumph over all my follies; and to maintain that calm dignity of character which you have a peculiar right to recommend, from the force and felicity of your example. Adieu; pray remember that I have implicit confidence in your honour, and that I depend on your not ſhewing even a line of this letter to your brother.

LETTER IV.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

IF I ever entruſt to any man, my dear Seymour, a commiſſion to chuſe a wife for me, it ſhall certainly be to you; for I know not in the world a man more entitled to the old claſſical compliment of "*elegans formarum ſpectator.*" You are indeed an accompliſhed judge, both of exterior and internal beauty; of the perſons and the

the minds of women; but to chuſe a wife is an arduous buſineſs, where good luck, as well as good ſenſe, is ſo eſſentially requiſite, that, without doubting your diſcernment, I may diſtruſt your fortune; and the more ſo, becauſe, after making one choice for yourſelf with conſummate ſucceſs (for no woman, in my opinion, can be more ſuited to you than Cornelia), you cannot reaſonably expect a ſecond inſtance of marvellous felicity in chuſing for your friend. Did you ever hear of a lottery in which the two twenty thouſands were ſelected by one perſon? As to myſelf, I am, you know, ſo far from being ſanguine in my expectations of all matters depending on chance, that I ſhall probably paſs through the world without once venturing on one of theſe richly promiſing matrimonial tickets; yet, believe me, it is not becauſe I think leſs highly of the ſex than you do; no, indeed, after all that Wit and Satire have written againſt women and wedlock, I am convinced that life is hardly ſupportable without ſome female connexion; and there is certainly no connexion ſo likely to produce laſting pleaſure and comfort as a marriage where Love may be conſidered as prime miniſter, under the ſovereign authority of Reaſon. But our lot, as to marriage or celibacy, is generally decided by ſome little incident that ſtarts up in the early part of life, and hurries us we know not whither. It was my deſtinity, as you are perfectly apprized, to be ſtrangely entangled in a tender attachment, that I could never entirely approve, that time and experience induce me ſtill more to condemn, and that I yet want the fortitude or the cruelty (call it which you will) to terminate in the

manner that would be moſt conducive to my quiet, my intereſt, and my reputation. Man is by nature ſo ſubtile a logician in his own defence, that he is hardly ever without a very ſpecious reaſon for ſuch conduct as his private inclinations impel him to purſue. Thus I impute my celibacy not ſolely to my ſecret bondage under the dominion of the too fond and wayward Sylvia, but to circumſtances of a more honourable complexion. My good ſiſter Lucy ſtands forth as the fair and oſtenſible motive for my ſingle life. Indeed the bitter diſappointment which this excellent girl met with in her matrimonial proſpect, made me very deſirous of ſettling her where ſhe might at leaſt enjoy the authority of a wife. She has now preſided over my houſe ſo long, has "borne her faculties ſo meekly, and been ſo clear in her great office," that I am inclined to believe we are happier in thus mutually ſupporting our liberties, than either of us would have been under matrimonial dominion.

This being the eaſe, you muſt allow the confirmed bachelor to remain in the quiet enjoyment of his various odities. I have juſt paſſed the period at which Ariſtotle ſays the good citizen ought to marry; and ſince I have let the ſeaſon ſlip, I muſt content myſelf with exhorting you to make ample amends for my omiſſion. Do not, however, ſuppoſe that I mean to throw a double duty upon you, or adviſe you to make love alternately to the virgin and the widow; which you ſeem half inclined to do. Dangerous frolics indeed! Pray be a little more conſtant in your devoirs and a little more temperate in your revenge.—Heaven preſerve your lively Louiſa!

Louiſa! I hope ſhe will ſoon be kiſſed by lips leſs vindictive than yours, and much younger than thoſe of the half-hoary ſwain whom your partiality has ſo unſeaſonably recommended to be made young again by her

"Quips and cranks, and wanton wiles."

Ah, Seymour, you will find perhaps, when you are on the verge of forty, that you are a better judge of ſuch diſparity. But if I were younger than I am, I ſhould ſtill dread a compariſon with a ſwain ſo ardent; I ſhould fancy that even the gay Louiſa, though ſhe looked like roſy Mirth when panting under your fiery embrace, might be metamorphoſed into green and yellow Melancholy, upon exchanging that embrace for the more phlegmatic careſſes of your friend. Leave me, therefore to my ſingularities. Let Providence provide for Louiſa; and do you confine all your gentle ſolicitude, all your tender attention, to the intereſting and deeply enamoured Cornelia;

"For the reſt,
Leave all to Heaven—be faithful, and be bleſt—"

to expreſs my good wiſhes to you in the words of a play which, Lucy tells me, is a great favourite with your lovely and accompliſhed fair-one.

Accept our united benedictions; and believe me ever

Your anxious monitor,
and affectionate friend.

LETTER

LETTER V.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

IN cloſing my laſt to you, my dear Edmund, I gave you reaſon to expect very ſpeedily ſome gay tidings in favour of my love, that were juſt announced to me by the arch ſmile of the good, grateful Caroline. That moſt ſincere and moſt zealous friend to my paſſion had indeed ſome very delicious intelligence to give me; but the excellent creature was ſo divided and confuſed, between her ardent deſire to ſerve me, and her dread of betraying her patroneſs, that I had ſome difficulty in drawing from her lips what ſhe came on purpoſe to communicate. At length, however, my faithful miniſter opened the budget, and preſented to me ſuch a ſtatement of affairs, that my heart bounded in my boſom with vanity and joy. My grand wiſh is accompliſhed; my exquiſitely tender Cornelia is jealous of me to diſtraction. She happened to ſpy me from her window, folding Louiſa in my arms, and almoſt fainted at the ſight. "If I do not take pity of her, as Benedick ſays, I am a villain. If I do not love her, I am a Jew." I ſhall not add, in the words of the play, "I will

go

go get her picture;" but I will haſten to get poſſeſſion of the enchanting original. Shake not thy head, my dear timorous monitor; and tell me no more of caution and delay. Shall I keep ſuch endearing ſenſibility on the rack of her own affectionate doubts and fears! "Aye, but, Seymour, I hear you exclaim, remember the great impediment in your way; which only time and patience can enable you to o'erleap." Fear not, my good friend: I am not blind to all the obſtacles before me; and have lately diſcovered one, of which my ſagacious monitor himſelf, perhaps, is not aware. Your kind ſiſter, Harriot, has not dealt quite ſo frankly with me as ſhe profeſſes to do; but I ſhall ſhew her in my turn, that when I meet with reſerve and diſguiſe, I alſo can make myſteries of my own, and conceal from my intimate friends both what I know and what I intend. After the docility and obedience which I have ſhewn to her mandates, Harriot ought to have imparted to me a ſecret that I accidentally got a ſuſpicion of, and at laſt with great difficulty extorted from the honeſt boſom of Caroline, who nobly choſe rather to break a promiſe which ſhe had inconſiderately made to Mrs. Audley, than appear barbarous and ungrateful to me. So the good creature reluctantly confeſſed to me, that my dear idol has made a haſty and deſperate vow, you may gueſs of what nature. Pray obſerve, that the ſoft Cornelia can be precipitate as well as her lover. But what are vows, my dear timid preceptor? Do we not know, from the experience of ages, that fond women make them as they make ſugar toys with concealed mottos, chiefly for the pleaſure of ſeeing them broken.

I have

I have juſt formed a glorious and delightful project for demoliſhing this paſte-like but unpalatable vow of my lovely widow. As the ſweet creature will ſwear, I muſt make her exchange her rough oath, for one of gentler form. Be not terrified at this intimation, my good cheriſher of unneceſſary apprehenſions; I am not going to play the terrific Jupiter, in all his fire, with this fond jealous Semele, and reduce the tender creature to aſhes; though ſhe ſeems by her provoking vow to invite all my powers. I will not explain to you what my project is, becauſe I know there is a tardy caution and timidity in your nature that would not allow you to approve it. Reſt however aſſured, that there is nothing diſhonourable, nothing ungentle, in the ſcheme. Trouble not yourſelf to ſend me any wiſe remonſtrances; for if you do I can only anſwer them thus,

" Sage! I have ſet my love upon a caſt,
And I will ſtand the hazard of the dye."

However I may proſper, believe me ever,

Your moſt affectionate

SEYMOUR.

P. S. Pray do not write to this houſe till you hear from me again; at leaſt on my account. I am departing immediately for London, where I have ſome ſhort buſineſs to diſpatch. I am deſirous of relieving my tender Cornelia from the torments of jealouſy, and of ſpeculating, at the ſame time, on the effects which my unexpected departure

departure may produce on her heart, before I enter on my grand and at preſent unutterable project. Adieu! my brain is working with anxiety, like that of an alchemiſt in the approach of the hour which is to make him either a Crœſus or a beggar.

LETTER VI.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO CORNELIA.

YOU do me juſtice, my very dear friend, in giving me credit for the moſt perfect ſympathy in all you endure. Indeed, I ſympathize with you ſo entirely, that my ſentiments and wiſhes ſeem to follow every variation of yours; and the little judgment that Nature gave me is reduced, I fear, to an abſolute nothing, by the exceſs of my anxiety for your very delicate and diſtreſſing ſituation. I feel at once flattered, delighted, grieved, perplexed, and overwhelmed, by your moſt friendly and endearing letter; for, to imitate your charming frankneſs, I muſt

muſt tell you that I feel myſelf utterly unworthy to ſuſtain the part of your adviſer and your guide, which, in your kind partiality, you ſeem to wiſh me to aſſume. You pay me a moſt animating compliment on the triumph that I gained over my own unfortunate and ill-placed affection. But what, my ſweet friend, what was my trial, compared to yours? To alienate a fond and ſimple heart from a man whoſe baſe character had been publickly detected, and who clearly deſerved general contempt, requires, I own, ſome painful efforts; but ſuch efforts few women, I believe, would fail to make with ſucceſs; becauſe, as you juſtly remark, our Pride in ſuch a conflict affords a very powerful ſupport to our Reaſon. But to relinquiſh the moſt accompliſhed, the moſt admired, the moſt engaging of men; to relinquiſh ſuch a being, when you know he doats on you with the moſt paſſionate attachment, and when he has awakened all the feelings of reciprocal affection; to relinquiſh him for one unhappy circumſtance, which is rather his misfortune than his fault; to reſolve and to preſevere in all this, may perhaps be within the power of our angelic Cornelia. I ſhall be ready to adore you, if you make the ſacrifice; but I muſt confeſs that the poor mortal Lucy would hardly be able to purchaſe Heaven itſelf at ſuch a price. Do not abhor me as an impious creature, my dear devout friend, for this confeſſion. Believe me, though I am a very weak, yet I am ſtill a very ſincere Chriſtian; but I am convinced that our feeble brains may think even of Religion too much; and as

a poet

a poet, who was very far from wanting piety, has very happily told us,

"The worſt of madmen is a ſaint run mad."

Do not imagine that I think the religious faith of a huſband is a matter of little conſequence to a wife: on the contrary, in a connexion where unexpected diſcord is ſo apt to ariſe, I think the two minds ſhould be as nearly in uniſon as poſſible, upon all the great objects of human contemplation. But where, my dear friend, is ſuch complete uniſon to be found? Perhaps not upon earth. Marriage would be a rare thing indeed if it were never to be ſolemnized till ſuch uniſon could be proved. It is the faſhion therefore, in this neceſſary and univerſal ceremony, to take a great deal upon truſt: and many a good wife, if ſhe ſees her huſband go decently to church, troubles her head very little concerning his private notions either of GOD or the Devil. Our ladies indeed, in former times, were more piouſly inquiſitive. I have read, I think in Hudibras, of certain devout dames of quality, who tied their huſbands to a bed-poſt, and whipped them too, to render them more godly.

Do not think, my dear gentle friend, that I mean to treat your ſcruples with a barbarous, unbecoming ridicule; no I only mean, though I attempt it but aukwardly, to divert your thoughts from dwelling too ſeriouſly and intenſely on a ſubject which, if you ſuffer it to prey ſo continually on your ſpirits, may undermine your health, without promoting any good end whatever. You entreat me to ſuppoſe myſelf

exactly

exactly in your ſituation, and tell you how I ſhould act; you allow, however, that I cannot exactly conceive all your ſenſations. I am glad you furniſh me with ſuch a comfortable excuſe for my ſuperior weakneſs; for I am dreadfully afraid that in ſuch a trial I ſhould not poſſeſs even a moiety of your virtue and reſolution; my preſent partiality, as a mere friend to this faſcinating Seymour, convinces me of the turn that my feebler reaſon would take in his behalf. I ſhould eaſily perſuade myſelf that a man, whoſe heart I thought had all the tender benevolence of the Goſpel, and whoſe life, I hoped, would have much of its purity, might be ultimately more favoured by its Divine Author, than many mortals who conceal an antipathy for his laws under a boaſted reverence for his name. My romantic fancy would ſuggeſt to me, that if I endangered my own ſoul by accepting ſuch a lover, I ſhould ſtill more deeply endanger his by refuſing him; and, in ſuch an alternative, I need not tell you for which hazard a fond, generous, romantic ſpirit might decide. But, if I cannot ſtrengthen your reſolution, as you expect me to do, by ſincerely profeſſing myſelf equal to ſuch a great ſacrifice as you meditate, I certainly ought, in owning my weakneſs, to own at the ſame time my apprehenſions of its conſequence. I am one, I believe of thoſe very common characters, juſt fooliſh and weak enough to act wrong on a very ſevere trial; and juſt wiſe and virtuous enough to feel inceſſant remorſe for having done ſo. Were I to marry Seymour in your ſituation, I am perſuaded I ſhould be wretched if I failed in the hope of leading him by gentle degrees, to my own religious

ligious perſuaſion. To act on a vain confidence in ſuch a hope would be, I acknowledge to act like a fool. Yet I feel that this folly, fortified as it would be by all the illuſive powers of Love, would be infinitely too ſtrong for my feeble reaſon. I ſhould moſt probably act ill from good affectionate motives, and be the dupe and victim of my own abſurdity. Alas! what a bitter enemy is the tendereſt of paſſions to the ſweet chearful ſerenity of female life! Yet what different effects does it produce in the different characters of our ſex! To the gentle, the artleſs, the open-hearted, Love is often a deep tragedy: to the notable and diſcreet, it is a ſort of heavy ſentimental comedy: to the perfectly vain and capricious, it is neither better nor worſe than an abſolute farce. Now, my deareſt Cornelia, in my meditation upon Love and You (two ideas moſt eaſily united!) I have conceived a wiſh and a hope that you may diſarm the cruelty of this tyrant, by treating him with a little levity, which, though foreign, I confeſs, to your natural temper, may be ſalutary and graceful in your preſent very ſingular ſituation. I think you are at preſent ſo circumſtanced, and your agitated ſpirits are in ſuch a tender ſtate, that you cannot decide either for or againſt your lover, without incurring ſuch ſevere pain as all who have the delight of knowing you muſt be anxious for your avoiding. But what neceſſity is there for any immediate deciſion? Truſt me, there is none. Pray let me teach you to play the coquette a little. Tell this precipitate Seymour, that young and admired

mired as you are, you muſt take ſome time to look round the world, and ſee what multitudes of accompliſhed men it exhibits, before you deign to beſtow your invaluable ſelf on any one of the crew. Tell him, he has not paſſed through a period of probation half long enough to convince you of his attachment. Diſpatch him as your ambaſſador to our divine Giuliana; and bid him liſten to that heavenly enthuſiaſt for a twelvemonth. Truſt me, my dear friend, you may venture to ſend him round the world, without any danger of his not returning to you with all the loyalty of Love. But you, dear jealous creature, would have a thouſand apprehenſions. O how I love you for the very frank confeſſion in your poſtſcript concerning his unexpected departure! I ſhould have begun to ſtand in dreadful awe of you, as an abſolute angel, but for that comfortable, endearing confeſſion.——There I ſee my fellow-creature; there, my dear, you are a true woman; for we can none of us bear to be deſerted, even by the man whom we are reſolute to diſcard. But I can ſafely aſſure you, that Seymour is no more able to deſert you, than the poor ſparrow, whoſe little leg is fettered, is able to fly away from the half-happy and half-terrified girl, who holds him in her ſtring. Be gentle, be tranquil yourſelf; and in time, I am perſuaded, you will inſpire this wild flutterer with as much patience and docility as you can wiſh him to poſſeſs.—That Heaven, my dear friend, may proportion your happineſs, even on earth, to the exquiſite tenderneſs

tenderneſs and purity of your heart, is the cordial and ardent prayer of

Your moſt faithful

and affectionate

LUCY.

LETTER VII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

PRAY, my good girl, can you ſend us any comfortable tidings of the run-away Seymour? To my utter aſtoniſhment, we are all in a ſtate of diſmal darkneſs concerning him. He left us rather abruptly, on the pretence of ſudden buſineſs in London. An odd ſeaſon this for buſineſs in the metropolis! From thence he has written me a letter that is very unlike himſelf, very ænigmatical, and full of cold and formal civility

civility. I thought I diſcovered a great cloudineſs on his brow for ſome days before he left us; and I am perſuaded that ſomething preſſed with unuſual weight upon his mind, though he would not confeſs it to me. I ſeem to have diſobliged him, yet I know not how; and my dear Audley aſſured me, on Seymour's ſudden departure, that he was as much puzzled as I am to account for the ſtriking change in the behaviour of our gueſt. The lovers cannot have had one of the petty quarrels ſo apt to ariſe between lovers, becauſe, with a marvelous ſingularity of diſcretion and reſerve, they have abſtained from all private interviews. I know not what to think. Sometimes I fancy that his haſty and unexpected decampment is a mere amorous ſtratagem, to try the real force of his fair-one's affection; yet Seymour is by no means a creature of artifice. Sometimes I am ready to fear that, like others of his volatile ſex and age, he is become a traitor in love, and that his heart has been ſeduced by the ſprightlineſs and bloom of Louiſa to forget its loyalty to the poor, penſive, and pale Cornelia, who is in truth moſt grievouſly altered of late, and ſeems to ſuffer a daily diminution of her beauty and her health, that wounds me to the ſoul. Yet, as his penetrating eyes muſt have diſcovered that this cruel effect has been occaſioned by her unquiet love for him, I am rather inclined to believe that it would more increaſe than diminiſh the attachment of a heart ſo generous and ſo tender. But, "I am weary of conjectures:" and, alas! I know not how "to end them," unleſs you can furniſh us with ſome authentic intelligence of our too intereſting fugitive.

tive. If there is any one here who is more in his confidence than I am, it muſt be his grateful Caroline, as he calls her; but if Caroline is really his prime confidante (as I a little ſuſpect) ſhe is a very cloſe and truſty one indeed, as I cannot force a ſyllable from her lips that will enable me to gueſs at his preſent intentions. The warm-hearted creature will only ſay of her protector, whom ſhe deems it a crime to mention without confidence and reſpect, that ſhe will pawn her life for the ſincerity and continuance of his friendſhip for me, and of his love for Cornelia. Alas, the poor Cornelia! ſhe declares herſelf greatly relieved by Seymour's ſudden departure; and ſuch is this great relief, that ſhe can hardly ſpeak of it without dropping a tear; but whether a tear of heavenly gratitude, or of mortal regret, I ſhall leave you, my dear ſagacious ſiſter, to gueſs. For my part, I am quite out of luck, in my attempts to ſtudy and to correct the reſtleſs feelings of both our friends; and as it often happens to a well-meaning mediator, I have partly loſt the favour and confidence of each. Seymour is apparently diſpleaſed with me; and I have offended the gentle Cornelia too, by repreſenting, perhaps too forcibly, the inability of her tender frame to perſevere without riſking her life in an utter abjuration of the man ſhe adores. Her delicate pride was a little wounded by my diſtruſting her fortitude; but I hope I have made my peace with her, by a lucky quotation of a paſſage from an old obſcure play, which I happened to light upon very opportunely. It ſtruck me as a pleaſant hint to us good women, who pique ourſelves now and then a little too much

much on the ſuppoſed ſtrength of our virtuous reſolutions. Here are the words for you:

" What woman hath
So ſail'd about the world of her own heart,
Sounded each creek, ſurvey'd each corner, but
That ſtill there may remain much *terra incognita*
To herſelf?"

You, I know, my dear Lucy, will ſmile at the moral truth, as well as the poetical quaintneſs, of theſe lines: they made even Cornelia ſmile:

" Albeit unuſed to the ſmiling mood."

In truth, we are all grown a ſet of poor diſmal creatures ſince our knight errant ſet forth from this caſtle in queſt of new and unknown adventures; even the laughter-loving Louiſa has loſt her gaiety, and mopes like a ſick kitten. As to myſelf, you will perceive but too clearly, by my letter, that I am ſadly out of tune and ſpirits; but you will not wonder at my being ſo, when you know that, beſides my anxiety for our dear ſuffering Cornelia, I have ſome inquietude to endure for my huſband, who is ſummoned to the death-bed, I fear, of his old friend and favourite fellow-collegian poor Verney: an event that gives a double chill to my heart, from a painful and perhaps fooliſh, yet natural, combination of ideas, which you, my dear Lucy, will be too ready to catch; but though the health of our dear Audley has been ever more delicate than that of his early friend, let us hope that he is deſtined, for all our ſakes, to enjoy a much longer life. Help us, my good girl,

girl, to diſſipate the gloom that hangs over us, by your chearful letters. I conclude that Seymour will poſt, before he returns to us, to his dear privy-counſellor Edmund; and I charge you to give us the quickeſt tidings that you poſſibly can of his ſafe arrival at your gate; as we ſhall otherwiſe begin to ſurmiſe, that the faithleſs rover is fled to Genoa, or the Lord knows whither. Take pity, therefore, on our ignorance and our terrors; and, accepting the united kind wiſhes of the poor deſolate females in this *man-deſerted* caſtle, believe me ever

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

LETTER VIII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

DO not think, my deareſt Edmund, that I have treated you ungratefully, in keeping you for ſeveral weeks in ſuſpenſe and dark inquietude concerning the deſtiny of a friend for whom

you have ever expreſſed the moſt engaging anxiety. A thouſand circumſtances have conſpired to prevent my giving you more ſpeedy intelligence of my proceedings. Inſtead, therefore, of accuſing me for being ſilent ſo long, give me great credit for attempting to write to you in theſe moments. I ſay attempting to write; for I am not ſure that I can, even for your ſake, confine my attention to my paper; and you will not wonder at my doubt, when I tell you, that ever nerve in my frame is trembling with anxious impatience for the expected arrival of my Cornelia; yes, of *my* Cornelia. She is approaching to my arms, and I am waiting in the houſe of a good elderly *man of God*, with a bleſſed inſtrument in my pocket, called a *ſpecial licence*, prepared on purpoſe to make the dear angel my own Cornelia by the ſweet luſtre of the evening ſtar. At this news my dear timid philoſopher himſelf will burſt into a ſhout of triumphant tranſport. But hold! I muſt not betray you into treacherous exultation, though I have the moſt ſanguine hopes that we ſhall ſpeedily exult together, on the conſummation ſo devoutly and ſo prophanely wiſhed. I have ſworn by Connubial Juno, to to make the lovely fond creature my bride this very night, if all-powerful Love, with his capital agents, Opportunity and Importunity, can accompliſh it. Do not exclaim againſt my raſhneſs and precipitancy. I have been driven to the meaſures I am purſuing. If vows are taken againſt me, muſt I not oppoſe them by ſtronger vows? Do you think Cupid is ſuch a paltry engineer, that if a mine is contrived againſt him he cannot counteract it by a ſuperior

rior mine of his own contrivance? Do not fear.—The plan of my ſurprize and attack is concerted in ſo admirable a manner, that I am almoſt ſure of annihilating all powers of reſiſtence. But, if I can, I will tell you circumſtantially the ſteps that have led me to the preſent heart-agitating criſis. When I firſt got from Caroline a reluctant account of my lovely widow's raſh vow, I thought it would have made me abſolutely frantic; and perhaps it might had not my good grateful Caroline exerted all her zeal and ingenuity to ſooth, to comfort, aud to perſuade me that Cornelia's paſſion for me is too ſtrong to let her perſevere in any barbarous reſolution againſt me, however ſolemnly enforced. With what exquiſite ſkill and rapidity do penetrating women decypher one another! My kind and zealous comforter, whoſe unabated gratitude towards me is ſo lively and enthuſiaſtic that I am convinced ſhe would chearfully hazard her life to enſure the ſucceſs of my love, ſhe, I ſay, unveiled to me a thouſand touching proofs of my Cornelia's fondneſs, which had eſcaped the ſearching eyes of the lover.—She maintained and upon ſpecial good grounds, that if I had once got my tender idol into a ſcene of perfect privacy, and had a fair opportunity of preſſing her to an immediate marriage, ſhe would be juſt as unable to reſiſt me, as a ſhip under way is unable to reſiſt the wind when it has filled every ſail. I give you this forcible ſimile in the very words of my excellent comforter and confederate, who has, you ſee, ſtored her mind with images, as well as her heart with generoſity, in the courſe of her nautical adventures. We agreed that

our dear diffident Cornelia ſtands in dreadful awe of your devout brother; and although your pleaſant and friendly ſiſter Harriot warmly profeſſes herſelf an advocate for our union, yet ſhe ſometimes makes uſe of arguments which produce, perhaps, an effect rather injurious to my cauſe, by offending the delicacy of Cornelia.—For theſe and ſundry other reaſons, we agreed alſo in the opinion that my dear timid angel would be much more likely to indulge all the tenderneſs of her heart, if I could contrive to paſs a day with her at a diſtance from her pious friends. We meditated on various ſchemes to accompliſh this great object. Chance at length ſuggeſted a plan to us that I have purſued with the moſt ſanguine hopes of ſucceſs. You may, perhaps, have heard of a very worthy old clergyman, whoſe name is Danvers, and who reſides about fifteen miles to the South of your brother. With this Divine I had a ſlight perſonal acquaintance, as he is indebted for all his little preferment to the family of my mother. He is a primitive, ſimple, retired character; as unlike as poſſible, they tell me, to thoſe modern men of GOD who have made me, I confeſs, not very partial to prieſts. Danvers is fond of privacy and peace, and he was once uncommonly happy in his domeſtic circle; but death has robbed him, not only of an excellent wife, but of a daughter who ſupplied her place in training his younger olive-branches, of which (as they ſeldom fail you know in holy ground) the good man has abundance. Theſe diſtreſſing events in his family obliged the honeſt old parſon, at the hazard of a little ſcandal, to call in a female aſſiſtant; and, moſt fortunately for me, the humble

humble governeſs of his younger children is a ſiſter of my grateful Caroline. While we were debating how to contrive a private interview for me with Cornelia at a diſtance from your brother's, Caroline happened to receive a letter from her ſiſter, who appears to be a good girl, almoſt as warm-hearted as herſelf. This letter was to ſay, that having many duties on her hands, which confined her at home, ſhe was unable to accompliſh her ardent deſire of coming to wiſh her ſiſter joy of her fortunate marriage; but as the indulgent Cornelia had once had the goodneſs to bring Caroline to her, ſhe moſt humbly petitioned for a repetion of that favour on the preſent joyous occaſion.

This letter ſtruck both Caroline and me as a ray of light from Heaven. Our quick imaginations began immediately to make it our guide in forming the project that I was ſo anxious to ſettle. It was agreed that I ſhould depart ſuddenly from your brother's, and, by not explaining the cauſe or time of my abſence, awaken all the little jealous ſurmiſes and fond alarms in the heart of Cornelia, to which that tender heart is ſufficiently inclined; that I ſhould haſten to renew and increaſe my acquaintance with Mr. Danvers, and engage him moſt firmly in my intereſt by every poſſible expedient.—Caroline undertook to furniſh me with conſtant intelligence concerning the health and affections of my dear and thus apparently deſerted widow. Alas! my tender angel has ſuffered not a little from this apparent deſertion; but I hope ſoon to make her a rich attonement for life; and, as the intelligent Caroline ſays, nothing is ſo delicious and overcoming as the ſud-

den ſight of a lover, whom a fond heart has almoſt deſpaired of ever ſeeing again. But, to reſume the thread of my ſtory: my excellent confederate undertook alſo to engage Cornelia for a diſtant day, to ride with her in the chaiſe to Mr. Danvers's, and to let Monſon attend them on horſeback. I was to have early notice of the time appointed, that I might arrive there the day before, and adjuſt all matters in the beſt method I could deviſe to accompliſh the grand object of my wiſhes. I ought to tell you, however, in juſtice to the excellent Caroline, that before ſhe would conſent to this final arrangement of our plan, which looked, ſhe ſaid, like betraying her patroneſs into my hands, ſhe bound me by the moſt ſolemn oaths, that I ſhould not attempt to make Cornelia my wife by any ſpecies of violence, but merely by the fair influence of fond and paſſionate intreaty; an engine which my zealous confederate thinks ſufficiently powerful to enſure us a victory. Heaven grant that ſhe may prove as true a prophet as ſhe is a truſty and invaluable ally! I have at length accomplished all the important preliminary points. As you know I little regard either fatigue or expence in the purſuit of projects that intereſt my heart, you will readily believe that I have not been inactive or tardy in the great article of making Danvers my friend. I have been fortunately able to provide for two branches of his family; and I have ſo completely ingratiated myſelf with this warm-hearted old Divine, that I believe he would be happy to marry me to an empreſs, without ſtipulating or wiſhing for a mitre as his reward. I

have

have prepared him with a general, and as you may ſuppoſe, a favourable idea of my pretenſions and views towards his lovely expected viſitant. I have obtained a cordial promiſe from him, that, if I find it expedient, he will appear as my advocate, in oppoſition to any religious ſcruples that my fond, yet reluctant fair-one, may urge againſt me; for this honeſt man of GOD moſt candidly acquieſces in my leading propoſition, that if I pay an exterior reverence to our Eſtabliſhed Religion, and ſolemnly engage to have my children educated in the belief of that Religion, there is nothing farther which ought to be required of me; and all the reſt is a private buſineſs between my own heart and Heaven. This delightful old Divine goes farther on my ſide, as he is both in theory and practice a warm friend to the ſupport and increaſe of the world. He ſays, that my lovely widow, having promiſed to wed no other man, cannot refuſe me without a crime and a great crime too; he ſays, no leſs than a breach of the primitive command; a command which ſhe has twice proved herſelf moſt admirably qualified to fulfill. Here is a Parſon for you, my dear Edmund! a Parſon after my own heart! for whoſe ſake I ſhall be reconciled, I think, to the whole fraternity that I have ſo cordially deteſted. He is, in truth, a pleaſant original character, that you my dear moraliſt, would have particular delight in obſerving. It was his maxim, he ſays, in early life, that if he had a faithful woman to embrace, and a ſpirited book to read, with a decent proviſion of daily bread, he ſhould have every thing that his mind or body had a right to require; and he held it wiſer to ſit con-

tentedly down with theſe bleſſings, than to ſcramble for the clerical toys of the world. In conformity to theſe principles, he devoted himſelf to his wife and his ſtudy. The firſt I know only by her fruits: and theſe do her credit. In his ſtudy I am now writing; and, if my heart and ſoul were not too much occupied by the ſcene in which I am ſoon to ſuſtain ſo trying a part, I would give you a minute deſcription of this neat little library, and the fathers in folio, who are now ſtaring me in the face as if aſtoniſhed at finding ſuch an unclerical fellow as I am in the midſt of ſuch company. The worthier maſter of theſe venerable ſhelves is walking in the little orchard that I command from the window, and meditating, I truſt, a very pious and eloquent harangue in my favour. With two ſuch ſupporters as this liberal friendly man of GOD and the zealous beloved Caroline, I think it is hardly poſſible for me to fail; yet, as the hour of deciſion draws nearer and nearer, I feel the agitation of my heart increaſing in the moſt painful degree. One moment I am overwhelmed with the tranſporting idea of perfect ſucceſs; and the next, I am ready to ſink under the agonies of a fancied diſappointment. But what ſhould diſappoint me! If ſhe is a woman, and I have pretty good reaſons for thinking her the very quinteſſence of a woman in tenderneſs and affection, ſhe muſt infalliably yield to the arguments of my Love, and the paſſionate ardour with which I mean to enforce them. But, my deareſt friend, I really can write to you no longer; and, truſt me, I have put no little conſtraint on myſelf in writing thus far. Heaven knows if you will find what I have

have written intelligible: I have no time, or faculties, to examine. My ſcrawl will at leaſt convince you that I am, however agitated, and however precipitate in your opinion, yet ever

Your grateful and affectionate,

though ungovernable,

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I am juſt withdrawing from the Parſonage, as I think it better for me not to ſurpriſe the dear tender creature till ſhe is refreſhed after her little journey; I have determined, therefore, not to make my appearance till after their early dinner. Heavens! if ſhe ſhould not arrive to that dinner! How I tremble, leſt my ſweet angel's health, which, as Caroline writes me word, is growing more and more delicate, ſhould prevent her joining this little party, though ſhe has promiſed to be with them; for ſhe is all ſweetneſs and good-nature, and has contracted an eſteem for the venerable Danvers! Adieu! I ſhall put this letter, unſealed, into my pocket, to diſpatch to you from the little inn to which I am retreating.

P. S. the ſecond.

Joy! Joy! my dear Edmund. I am this inſtant enlivened by a delicious billet from the faithful Caroline. My angel is actually arriv-

ed; her health a little reſtored, her ſpirits tenderly in tune; the ſweet ſoul was much gratified by an oſtenſible letter which I lately ſent my truſty confidant, expreſſing the real anxiety of my ſoul concerning the late viſible change in her health. Now, Love and Eloquence, inſpire me! Farewell.—The moments grow precious indeed, for before midnight I ſhall be as bleſt as a demi-god or as miſerable as a demon. Do not blame me. The chance is worth the conflict. Whatever its event, I will, if I am alive, aſſuredly write to you to-morrow; ſo hope the beſt, and once more farewell.

LETTER IX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

ALL is over.—We have encountered; and how ſevere the encounter has proved to both parties you my judge, when I tell you that each may deſcribe the event in the famous words of poor

poor Francis the Firſt of France, "We have loſt every thing but our Honour." Never was a conteſt more obſtinately ſupported; victory there is none; nor any proſpect of renewing the contention. I am diſtracted with a thouſand unutterable feelings, compounded chiefly of ſhame, admiration, and anger. I have acted ſo directly oppoſite to your counſels, that I cannot fly to you for conſolation; for though I am certain you would ſtill very willingly give me all in your power, I could not receive any thing like comfort from you under my preſent ſenſations. It ſeems as if I could bear the ſound of no human voice but that of Giuliana. I ſhall ſteal away to Italy; and if I can ſufficiently calm my perturbed ſpirits as I travel, I will give you a faithful narrative of the ſcene which has made me perhaps a wretch for life. At preſent I am ſo unable to decypher my own complicated emotions, that I really cannot tell whether my love is heightened or extinguiſhed. In one moment the exquiſite tenderneſs of Cornelia is the object of my idolatry; in the next, her pride and ſuperſtition awaken my indignation and abhorrence. Yet her tenderneſs—O God! my dear Edmund, you never ſaw or heard of ſuch angelic tenderneſs—but you ſhall hear it all when I grow more compoſed.—Farewell.

LET-

LETTER X.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY

IT falls to my lot, my dear Lucy, to give you that intelligence which I ſolicited from you. Would to Heaven it were more chearful! But the intractable impetuous Seymour has involved himſelf, and all of us, in gloom and wretchedneſs. Inſtead of paſſing a few ſocial and comfortable weeks with you and Edmund, as I hoped he would, this haſty provoking creature has been trying a deſperate project with the poor unprepared Cornelia. He has reduced her ſhattered nerves to the moſt pitiable weakneſs that you can poſſibly imagine, but without gaining the triumph he expected over her religious reſolution.

You, I know, my good girl, will join with me in admiring, in idolizing, the unconquerable fortitude of this pure angel; and in lamenting, at the ſame time, the ſevere deſtiny by which her tranquillity and her health are ſo cruelly deſtroyed. But I am talking to you as if your were already apprized of the diſtreſſing ſtory that I have to impart. You will, I know, be painfully eager to hear all the particulars; and,

and, as you have an unqueſtionable right to hear them, I will give you as many as I can.

If Caroline had not her high obligations, her ardent gratitude, and great merit of all kinds, to atone for one indiſcretion, I know not how it would be poſſible for me to forgive her; for ſhe has been, in a great meaſure, the ſource of all our preſent diſtreſs. She has been the confederate of Seymour in a long train of artifice and deceit towards Cornelia; to which I ſhould have thought her ingenuous nature could never have conſented. But Gratitude, like Love, may be allowed to be blind; and this warm-hearted creature has acted in the whole affair from ſuch generous motives, and is ſo deep a ſufferer in her own heart and ſoul, from the failure of the project, that, inſtead of feeling any laſting anger againſt her, ſhe is nearly as much the object of my pity and admiration as our dear unſubdued, but exhauſted and almoſt lifeleſs, Cornelia herſelf.

Inſtead of beginning my ſtory as I ought to do, I am ſtill running into reflections upon it. But, that I may not torture your affectionate curioſity, I will grow a more methodical hiſtorian, and relate all I know in due order.

Yeſterday morning the Monſons and Cornelia ſet forth, on an expedition for the day, to viſit a very worthy old rural Divine, whoſe houſe and young family have been lately entruſted to a ſiſter of Caroline's; and as the girl may be thought rather too young herſelf for the office of ſuch a governeſs, our good Cornelia has been ſolicitous to countenance her, by attending her favourite Caroline whenever ſhe went

went to ſee her ſiſter. I little thought that the expedition of yeſterday had any motive on the part of Caroline, except ſiſterly affection. Cornelia was rather inclined to remain with us, but I united my entreaties to thoſe of the eager ſuppliant Caroline, and prevailed on her to join the little party, as I thought the ride and the amuſement of a new chearful ſcene would be beneficial to her declining health. In the evening I and Louiſa grew very anxious for her return. The clock ſtruck nine, and no Cornelia appeared, though we had charged her to avoid the being abroad after ſun-ſet. As my niece and I were alone, we began to alarm ourſelves with various fancied and fearful cauſes of her delay. We ſauntered in weary expectation, and, after looking a hundred times over the pales, were returning in deſpair into the houſe, when we heard a horſeman galloping at full ſpeed behind us, which, as we had now only the ſtars to light us, increaſed our alarm. It was Monſon, whom the conſiderate Caroline had diſpatched to ſave us from painful anxiety. He aſſured us that Cornelia was ſafe and well; but that the hours had glided away ſo imperceptibly, and the evening was grown ſo late before ſhe thought of departing from Mr. Danvers's, that ſhe would not return till the morrow. My apprehenſions were more awakened than quieted by this meſſage. I began to croſs-examine Monſon. He is a brave honeſt creature, without any talents for equivocation. I ſoon brought him to a confeſſion that Seymour had joined the party. Judge, my dear girl, of the unutterable tumult of joy and concern, of hope and fear, that began to reign in my thoughts from this information. I could get little more from Monſon.

ſon. He conjured me to hope and believe the beſt, and to wait patiently for the important tidings of next day; offering to ride back immediately, that I might have thoſe tidings with the utmoſt expedition. This, however, I would not allow. We all withdrew to our beds; but, for my part, I could not ſleep a wink; and about one, I heard the rattle of Cornelia's chaiſe, driving haſtily to the door. I gueſſed who it was, and flew half-naked, with my night-gown wrapped round me, to receive her. She had croſſed the hall, and reached the library; but could get no farther. The moment I appeared, ſhe ſprang towards me; but ſunk into my arms, and fainted. As ſoon as ſhe revived, ſhe aſked wildly for her children; and hurrying into her chamber, ſhe threw herſelf on her knees by the ſide of their bed, and exclaimed, "O, my dear infants, it is for your ſake that I have torn my poor heart to pieces! and GOD himſelf will rear you in innocence and happineſs as my reward. But what will become of the loſt Seymour? His violent nature will plunge him in vice, in miſery, in perdition!" At theſe words her whole frame was convulſed with anguiſh.—The penitent and affrighted Caroline joined with me in conjuring her to be calm and ſilent; to let us put her immediately to bed, and give her ſome of the medicine to which ſhe has frequently had recourſe of late, and with conſtant good effect, in the ſevere agitation of her nerves. The poor deſolate ſoul was now all obedience to our injunctions. She ſpoke not a ſyllably more, but to expreſs her ſorrow for proving ſuch a ſource of trouble to her friends, and to bleſs us for our attention. Caroline and I did not ſtir from her chamber

chamber till we had ſeen her tolerably compoſed on her pillow. We then retired together to my room, where the ſelf-accuſing Caroline began at once to condemn and to apologize for her own conduct.

It ſeems, this well-meaning creature had unguardedly betrayed to Seymour the haſty vow of Cornelia. From that moment his fiery indignant ſpirit became intractable. Nothing would appeaſe him but a promiſe from Caroline to aſſiſt him in the ſecret contrivance of ſuch a project as they have juſt carried into execution. Caroline confeſſes they both thought, and I muſt own I ſhould have been of their opinion, that if Seymour could obtain any good private opportunity of urging Cornelia to an inſtant marriage, ſhe was too deeply enamoured to have the power of reſiſting his ardent and paſſionate entreaties. I muſt ſay, their plot was very ingeniouſly conducted. Seymour, indefaticable in every purſuit where his affections are intereſted, and ſanguine in every hope that his heart and fancy conſpire to cheriſh, had contrived to make the old clergyman, Mr. Danvers, his hearty friend and advocate, and had provided himſelf with a ſpecial licence, that, if a ſingle moment of yielding tenderneſs ſhould preſent itſelf, he might be ſure of rendering it deciſive, and effectually preclude the dear ſcrupulous reluctant Cornelia from all poſſibility of receding. The vehement and artful creature, though he had been lurking ſome time at Mr. Danvers's, did not make his appearance till after dinner. Our ſweet, unconſcious, and unſuſpecting friend was viſibly ſurprized and delighted at the firſt ſight of him. What paſſed in their private conference

ference my informer cannot tell; but I imagine and hope that Edmund will have a full account of this raſh and cruel affair from the hot-brained lover himſelf. Alas! poor fellow, he is probably cool enough by this time; for I have ſome reaſon to ſuppoſe that he paſſed the night like a ſad wild Quixote as he is, on horſeback, and perhaps wandering through our woods; but more of his nightly adventure in its proper place. I muſt return to Mr. Danvers's.

Caroline ſays, that, when Seymour had been about two hours alone with Cornelia, he came with a moſt agitated countenance to Mr. Danvers, and ſaid, "I have been talking, Sir, to no purpoſe, to the moſt marble-hearted woman that God ever created. Pray, my good venerable friend, pray come, and try for me if your arguments have more influence with her than mine."——Caroline remained with her ſiſter, while Seymour renewed his attack with his reverend ally. She ſays, ſhe could hear that their diſcourſe was very warm and loud; but as no one came out of the room, and it grew late, ſhe ſent off her huſband to me, with the beſt meſſage that ſhe could deviſe in her confuſion, to prevent my being alarmed. The ſecret debate was continued, with encreaſing vehemence, for more than another hour: when Danvers came out to Caroline, exclaiming, "Your lady is an angel indeed! I did not think there could be ſuch divine eloquence, and ſuch angelic integrity and fortitude in woman! But pray go and perſuade her not to depart, as ſhe talks of doing, at this late hour; but to honour and ſanctify my humble roof by ſleeping under it.

I proteſt

I proteſt to God, ſhe ſhall be obeyed as an angel in all things. I will ſooner forfeit all the great bleſſings that I owe to the generoſity of Mr. Seymour, than ever appear as her antagoniſt again. She muſt be obeyed; but pray go, and try to prevail on her to ſtay with us to night." Upon this the poor diſconcerted Caroline ventured into the room, abaſhed and trembling, as ſhe ſays, leſt ſhe ſhould have incurred the everlaſting diſpleaſure of that kind patroneſs whom it would be worſe than death to offend. On her opening the door, a ſcene preſented itſelf to her exactly the reverſe of what ſhe expected. Seymour was ſilent, dejected, weeping; Cornelia ſpeaking, with a countenance radiant and glowing. She interrupted and anticipated the firſt prayer of the penitent Caroline for pardon. "Your deceit, my good friend, cried the forgiving angel, has, I know ariſen partly from miſtaken kindneſs towards me, and partly from a laudible gratitude towards one whoſe ſervices to you may ſurely give a ſanction to any virtuous exceſs. But, for Heaven's ſake, my dear Caroline, order the chaiſe immediately." "Aye, order it immediately, cried Seymour, ſtarting from a ſort of ſullen reverie. The man whoſe ſervices ſhe condeſcends to compliment cannot obtain from her the little ſacrifice of her pride." "Ungenerous Seymour, exclaimed the offended angel, have you a right to accuſe me of pride? you to whom I have fondly declared that, if you were but a faithful worſhiper of the God I worſhip, I would rather be your wife than married to any man, however exalted by faculties or ſtation?" At this very juſt and tender reproof the ſullen and imperi-

ous

ous Seymour threw himſelf at her feet, and began to kiſs her hand with great vehemence bathing it with his tears. Caroline pauſed, and hoped that the order for the chaiſe would be recalled; but, alas! it was repeated by the unſhaken Cornelia. "It is decided then, cried Seymour, ſpringing up with a frantic air: we are to part for ever!" Caroline heard no more; but, quitting the room, went to order the chaiſe; and, to her aſtoniſhment, ſaw Cornelia get into it unattended by Seymour. She ſays, that her own panic at that moment was the moſt dreadful ſhe ever felt; for ſhe concluded, that being reſolved not to ſurvive this galling diſappointment, he was preparing to deſtroy himſelf, and ſhe expected to hear the ſound of his piſtol. An irreſiſtble impulſe hurried her, ſhe ſays, in this idea, into the little parlour where Cornelia had left him. She found him ſitting, with a terrific ſternneſs of features, and eyes flaſhing with a diſdainful fury; but, at the ſight of his grateful and anxious Caroline, his proud heart ſoftened. He caught her in his arms, and exclaimed, "Heaven bleſs thee, thou moſt generous of friends! thou art the only being that I have ever met with on earth whoſe ideas of Love and Friendſhip appear equal to my own.——Go, and enjoy the bleſſings which thy affectionate heart has ſo well deſerved; and I conjure thee, let them not be poiſoned by too keen a ſenſe of my miſerable lot. The extreme acuteneſs of my preſent anguiſh cannot laſt long. Go, my tender Caroline, go to thy happy Monſon; who ſhall find me his friend, whether I live or die." Caroline, having haſtily extorted a promiſe from him, that he would do nothing deſperate

deſperate to deſtroy his life, or impair his health, now followed Cornelia, who was receiving the compliments, or rather the adorations, of the venerable Danvers, who had handed her into her chaiſe, and continued to expreſs his admiration of her principles and conduct, and his high ſenſe of the honour which her viſit had conferred upon him. As ſoon as they drove from his door, Caroline began to repeat her entreaties for pardon; but the poor Cornelia was in no condition to reply. The great efforts ſhe had made to ſuſtain her ſpirit in this long conference, and final parting, as ſhe imagined, with Seymour, had ſo miſerably exhauſted her little portion of ſtrength, that, as ſoon as ſhe was alone with Caroline, ſhe ſunk into ſuch a ſtate of debility and tears as frightened her attendant to the greateſt degree. The terrified Caroline thought it would be hardly poſſible to bring her home alive, and earneſtly implored her to turn back and paſs the night under the friendly roof of Mr. Danvers; but in ſpite of her extreme bodily weakneſs, the dear angel was firm in her purpoſe of returning. She declared that ſhe was already much relieved by her tears, and that, if Caroline would have the goodneſs to let her be quite ſilent, her ſtrength and ſpirits would gradually revive. Caroline ſays they were perfectly mute for ſeveral miles. Cornelia herſelf broke the ſilence, by aſking her in what condition ſhe had left the raſh, mortified, and indignant Seymour. When Caroline deſcribed the change in his features, from pride and fury to tenderneſs and gratitude, and repeated the kind words in which he took leave of her, the poor Cornelia burſt into a freſh agony

gony of tears; and juſt as this had ſubſided they arrived at our door.—Cornelia, in getting out of the chaiſe, thought to ſupport herſelf on the arm of the ſervant who had attended her on horſeback; but, to her aſtoniſhment, ſhe perceived, in reaching the ground, that ſhe had leant upon Seymour. She ſtarted, and exclaimed, "O Heaven, are you come to perſecute me here!" "No, Madam," replied her haſty lover, ſeverely galled by her exclamation, "it is you alone who have the ſpirit of perſecution—I perſecute no one—I thought it my duty as a man, to guard you hither; and ſince I am rewarded only by a reproof, I here bid you farewell for ever." With this bitter adieu he ſprang haſtily upon his horſe, and galloped away with all poſſible ſpeed, as if he had no deſire but to get at a diſtance from the woman by whom, though he knows ſhe loves him to diſtraction, he thought himſelf inſulted. It was, I imagine, this laſt unexpected meeting and parting which occaſioned the fainting of our dear unhappy friend at the time when I flew to receive her.—Alas! how very grievous it is, that two ſuch very amiable creatures, ſo mutually enamoured ſhould only prove a ſource of miſery to each other! yet I am now ſadly afraid that they are deſtined to be ſo as long as they exiſt. What is become of the fiery Seymour, Heaven only knows! I moſt cordially hope that he is bending his courſe to your houſe; as there is no place, I think, where he can be ſo kindly and properly taken care of in his preſent vexatious delirium. I charge you, my dear Lucy, to give us the firſt news of him that you hear with the utmoſt expedition. This, indeed, I deſerve for

for writing to you, as I do at preſent, with ſleepleſs and aching eyes. I was ſo eager to get all the particulars I could from Caroline, that we ſat up together till five this morning, and I quitted my bed again before nine to viſit my poor Cornelia, and to diſpatch this long hiſtory to you by the poſt of to-day. My dear patient has had a wretched night, and is ſo faint and dejected that I have inſiſted on her remaining in bed till ſhe hears the firſt dinner-bell.—My dear Audley is at preſent in happy ignorance of all theſe diſtreſſing adventures, and I believe I ſhall keep him ſo till he returns to us; for he has vexations more than enough where he is. Poor Verney died, as we expected; and my good huſband has a very troubleſome executorſhip to engroſs his attention.—I tell him, that I ſhall begin to give him a bad character to the world, to exempt him from theſe burdenſome offices, which he has ſo frequently drawn upon himſelf by his activity and benevolence.

I have kept this unſealed to the laſt moment, in hopes that I might tell you with comfort that Cornelia was a little revived. She is juſt come down ſtairs; but, alas! with looks ſo piteous, and ſuch an appearance of weakneſs and dejection, that you, my dear tender Lucy, could hardly caſt an eye on her ſadly altered countenance without burſting into tears. Even our young and joyous Louiſa ſays ſhe never ſaw a figure ſo affecting. This good girl has a very tender heart, with all her wild vivacity; and behaves to Cornelia with a ſweet compaſſionate gentleneſs that pleaſes me very much. Adieu.

Pray

Pray write to us directly; and, accepting our united good wiſhes, believe me ever

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

LETTER XI.

FROM LUCY TO MRS. AUDLEY.

YOU are entitled, my dear Harriot, to my moſt cordial and ſpeedy thanks, for your very kind and intereſting, but grievous, account of your lovely gueſt, and the provoking ungovernable, precipitate Seymour: I know not whither he has moſt excited my anger or my pity, by this frantic meaſure, which, his deſponding friend Edmund ſays, will prove his utter deſtruction. I never ſaw my brother ſo deeply vexed and mortified by any miſchance relating to himſelf as he is by this raſh and luckleſs proceeding

ceeding of Seymour. As to myſelf, you know I ſeldom catch his deſpondency on any occaſion; and I derive a ray of hope, which I am truly happy to communicate to you, from one expreſſion in a brief and haſty billet that Edmund has juſt received. We ſuppoſe it was written juſt after the fatal conference, and perhaps before he attended Cornelia to your door. However that may be, the expreſſion that inclines me not to deſpair, is this: after deſcribing the turbulent wretchedneſs of his mind, he ſays, "It ſeems as if I could bear the ſound of no human voice but that of Giuliana—I ſhall ſteal away to Italy." Now my good Harriot, do you not join with me in hoping that our divine enthuſiaſt of Genoa may repay the important ſervice ſhe received from this generous miſguided mortal; and, after ſoothing the fiery tumult in his affections, reſtore him to us the reaſonable religious being that we have ſo vainly endeavoured to make him; and, as the fond Cornelia once exclaimed to you,

"Were he but Chriſtian, what could man be more!"

His many noble and endearing virtues have, I confeſs, made ſuch an impreſſion on me, that I cannot bring myſelf to think very ill of him or his deſtiny. I cannot allow my imagination to believe, that a man whoſe good deeds have been ſo manifold and great, I might even ſay ſo Chriſtian, will be utterly abandoned by Providence. No, my dear, I am perſuaded, that, inſtead of being plunged, as Edmund fears, in a long courſe of licentiouſneſs and diſtraction, he

he will be awakened by his and our good angel Giuliana to a happy ſenſe of all his errors; and return at laſt to repay us for all the painful inquietude which his blind impetuoſity and unſettled faith have occaſioned to us. Pray ſupport the dear drooping Cornelia by this idea. Pray tell her alſo, that I am ready to worſhip her religious magnanimity; and that I ſpeak with a *prophetic confidence*, when I ſay, that I ſhall ſee it rewarded. Heaven bleſs her! and all your houſehold! I cloſe in extreme haſte, that I may anſwer your anxious enquiry by the returning poſt.

Ever your affectionate and ſanguine

LUCY.

P. S. Pray let me hear again very ſpeedily of the dear ſufferer's health. Her ſoul, I perceive, is fully equal to the ſevereſt of trials. But, alas! what a feeble ſecond has that pure and reſolute ſoul in her very delicate and now enervated frame!

LETTER XII.

FROM MRS. AUDLEY TO LUCY.

WE revive a little, my good girl; your very kind and animating ſuggeſtion has done us more eſſential good than all our medical reſtoratives. Since I wrote to you I have paſſed ſome days in the moſt bitter anxiety. The ſenſible and ſanguine Brenſil himſelf, who is, you know, my oracle in medicine, was ſo affected and alarmed, that he was little able to furniſh me with that hope and courage which I endeavoured to catch from him, and which, on moſt occaſions, he is much inclined and well qualified to inſpire. He ſays he never in his life beheld a human frame reduced to ſuch extreme debility by the mere agitations of heart and mind. As he is, you know, perfectly worthy of confidence, I thought it beſt to entruſt him with the whole private hiſtory; and I was pleaſed with the extreme ſenſibility which he diſcovered on hearing what his two friends had endured. The tenderneſs of Cornelia, and the gallantry of Seymour, had intereſted him ſo much in their affection, that he was mortified as much as we are by the unfortunate turn it has

has taken. Though he profeſſes to admire the devout fortitude of our friend, I can perceive that he would gladly have given a doſe of opium to her Piety, and of hartſhorn to her Love, to ſecure a proſperous iſſue to the precipitate enterprize of the engaging Seymour. Who, as Brenſil ſays, can know him, and not wiſh his proſperity? It is, I am convinced, an affectionate dread of proving the bane of his proſperity that gives the keeneſt anguiſh to the heart of Cornelia. Fond as ſhe is of the faſcinating creature, ſhe could (I am now perſuaded) eaſily relinquiſh his ſociety, enchanting as it is, and feel herſelf recompenced by the delight and pride ſhe takes in devoting herſelf to her children, if ſhe were not haunted by the terror that her rejection of Seymour will plunge that impetuous mortal into the moſt ruinous exceſſes of vice and folly. This terror had gained ſuch dominion over her thoughts, that ſhe could hardly utter any other idea in the two or three firſt days after the cruel conference. Indeed we allowed her to ſpeak but little; and ſhe was, and ſtill remains, much more inclined to ſilence than to converſation. At firſt it ſeemed as if all her bodily faculties were exhauſted and deſtroyed by the conflict ſhe had endured. She had utterly loſt her appetite, and even her palate; at times a ſort of cold inſenſibility, like petrefaction, appeared to be creeping over her frame. This would be ſucceeded by ſuch a tremulous irritation of the nerves, and ſuch a tendency to tears, that a ſingle word addreſſed to her would ſometimes make her weep. Brenſil was grievouſly afraid that ſhe was ſinking into a rapid atrophy, which would hurry her to the grave.

He has watched this moſt intereſting of patients with a paternal anxiety. He has got various preſcriptions for her from the phyſician, whoſe inſight into human maladies and affections is much deeper, he ſays, than that of all his fraternity. But they both agree that, as the heart of our tender friend is the main ſeat of her diſorder, nothing will ſo effectually contribute to her reſtoration as the balm of ſympathy and friendſhip aſſiduouſly applied to this lacerated heart. Their opinion has been viſibly confirmed by the favourable impreſſion which your kind letter, my dear Lucy, produced upon her ſpirits. When I read to her what you ſay of Giuliana, a ſudden flush aroſe on her pale cheek, and her ſunk eyes ſparkled with momentary joy, "Ah, my dear Harriot, ſhe ſaid, kind as you are, Lucy underſtands me better than you do. My hapleſs love is much more diſintereſted than you imagine. Believe me, I would moſt gladly renounce all expectations, and every wiſh of ſeeing Seymour again in this world, if ſome kind angel would give me an aſſurance of meeting him in Heaven. But, to think that I may be inſtrumental to the final perdition of a being ſo generous and ſo beloved!—'tis that, ſhe cried, burſting into an agony of tears—'tis that which has diſtracted me!" But recovering herſelf with an aſtoniſhing quickneſs and ſpirit, "No, ſhe continued, I will no longer ſuffer this horrid apprehenſion to perſecute my poor brain. I will cling to Lucy's moſt comfortable idea—He is—he is too good to be abandoned by Providence!"

You

You may judge, my dear, from your own heart, how zealouſly the penitent Caroline and I labour together to make the moſt of your conſolatory ſuggeſtion, and to confirm our angelic patient in this train of thought. I muſt do Caroline the juſtice to ſay that, however blameable ſhe might be in her ſecret and unfortunate, but tempting, conſpiracy, ſhe has made every compenſation that a tender and contrite heart could make by the moſt indefatigable and affectionate attention to our dear invalid. The ſtate of Cornelia is ſuch as requires the moſt delicate management; and without the aſſiſtance of Caroline I ſhould find myſelf very unequal to it: this good creature, full of gratitude and every quick feeling, has the rare talent of knowing how to be very aſſiduous about the ſick, without moleſting or fatiguing them.

One of the moſt difficult points we have had to regulate has been the degree of indulgence we ſhould ſhew to our dear patient concerning her children; ſhe has been frequently diſtracted between her deſire to have the ſweet boys with her, and her want of ſtrength to ſupport their ſociety. To make the matter more diſtreſſing, we have not been able to keep the little lively rogue William from aſking his mother perpetual queſtions concerning his favorite Mr. Seymour; ſuch as, "Why he went away from us? when he will come back? whom he is gone to ſee?" and a thouſand other continually ſuggeſted by infantine curioſity and affection.

There have been days when ſuch little queſtions as theſe were like ſo many daggers; but at length, I thank Heaven, the palpitating

heart of our dear, harraſſed friend is grown more compoſed. To-day I think I ſee ſomething of her former ſelf both in her countenance and converſation. She has been ſo deplorably low, that I have rather rejoiced that my huſband was abroad, as ſhe could not have ſupported even his ſociety; but I begin now to wiſh ardently for his return, becauſe I think her ſo materially revived that his gentle and ſoothing manners will, I am perſuaded, in her preſent ſtate, contribute to her recovery. We do not, however, expect him this week; and I hope, before that time the ſweet, trembling convaleſcent will receive the moſt powerful of cordials in a good account of the wanderer for whoſe ſafety and welfare ſhe is ſo painfully anxious.

As he departed in ſuch indignation, I queſtion if he will have the grace, which he certainly ought to have, to addreſs a letter of apology to Cornelia; but, at all events, Edmund will hear of his movements; and I need not requeſt you to diſpatch the firſt tidings you receive as rapidly as you can to

Your affectionate

HARRIOT.

P. S. My dear patient charges me to ſend her love; and to add her proteſtation, that ſhe is ſure ſhe is infinitely better than I have repreſented her, whatever my repreſentation may be. My only way of taking vengeance for this oblique ſtroke at my veracity, ſhall be, to read this poſtſcript

poſtſcript aloud, and this only, after adding to it, that I ſincerely hope and expect to ſee my patient quite herſelf again in another week or two. Farewell.

LETTER XIII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

AT length I am got to Dover, but with a mind more tumultuous than the ſea I am going to croſs. It was not thus with me, my dear Edmund, when I was laſt at this port with our lovely enthuſiaſt, the truly impaſſioned Giuliana; that heavenly woman could never have uttered ſuch an inſult to the man ſhe loved as I have heard, ſince I diſpatched my ſhort and haſty billet to you, from the lips of her whom I was once fool enough to think ſuperior in tenderneſs to Giuliana herſelf.

When the inflexible bigot ordered her chaiſe to depart from Danvers's, late at night as it was, indignation and reſentment ſeemed to deprive me of motion. I could not put her into the carriage which was to convey her with ſuch unſeaſonable barbarity from him who had hoped to paſs a bridal night in her arms. She bade me adieu with a cold ſtately pride. It robbed me of utterance, and almoſt of my ſenſes. I continued ſitting in the room ſhe quitted, with a brain ready to ſplit with rage and diſappointment. My good, grateful Caroline came to give me a tenderer farewell. Her ſoftneſs was my preſervation. I wept upon her boſom. I began to think leſs harſhly of Cornelia, becauſe this moſt faithful of creatures ſtill laboured to convince me of her love. I diſmiſſed this kind and ſypathetic confidante with the benediction of my heart, whoſe fiery anguiſh ſhe had ſoftened and relieved. As ſoon as they drove away from Danvers's, I ordered my horſe that I might attend them unſuſpected; and, before I mounted to gallop after the chaiſe, I ſcrawled my ſhort and diſmal letter to you. I ſoon overtook the women; it was my intention merely to ſee them ſafe home, without letting them know that I did ſo; but as I approached your brother's, my heart was more and more ſoftened, by a recollection of many little proofs which Cornelia had there exhibited of her fondneſs towards me, and I could not reſiſt the temptation of helping her to alight from the carriage. She ſtarted at the ſight of me, and aſked me, with an inſulting tone that is ſtill re-echoed round my heart, "If I was come to *perſecute* her there?" I hope the ſpirit of my inſtantaneous reply has convinced her

her of the injury ſhe did me by that baſe and barbarous expreſſion. If it has not, my preſent conduct ſhall ſoon prove to her that an injurious word was never more miſapplied. If I have any knowledge of my own heart and mind, never was a human being leſs inclined than myſelf either to inflict or to endure perſecution in any ſhape. My ſoul abhors every ſhadow of tyranny; my evil deſtiny ſeems determined that I ſhall only prove a ſource of pain to thoſe whoſe permanent happineſs I had the moſt ardent wiſh to promote. But, in removing far from them, I may diminiſh perhaps this unfortunate influence on their comfort. One ſatisfaction I ſhall at leaſt poſſeſs, that I can no longer be upbraided with a deſign of perſecuting her whoſe tranquillity, ungrateful as ſhe is, I would willingly die to ſecure. To relinquiſh life, indeed, would be no ſacrifice to me at preſent. I never wiſhed to live, but for the ſake of conferring happineſs on the objects of my affection; but as my perverſe ſtars ſeem to put this out of my power, they may terminate my exiſtence whenever they pleaſe. I can die, as I have lived, without fear; becauſe aſſuredly I never meant to do any great deliberate evil; and I have vainly hoped to accompliſh much good, in which I have been thwarted, I know not why, by that myſterious power to whom, for the want of a better name, we give the title of Deſtiny or Chance. The good Caroline expreſſed to me a terror for which I muſt love her ſtill more than I did, though it ſhews more the trembling ſenſibility of her own heart, than her knowledge of my character: ſhe was terrified leſt I ſhould deſtroy myſelf in

the agony of mortified affection; but, as you know, my dear friend, I have ever conſidered ſuicide, when it does not proceed from frenzy, as the act of a coward and a fool. It is cowardice to run into the cellar becauſe the houſe you inhabit happens to be ſhaken by thunder. It is folly not to reflect that, if chance has unexpectedly made you wretched, the ſame chance may as ſuddenly reverſe her operation.

You ſee I can play the reſolute philoſopher even in my fits of bittereſt vexation. I confeſs, however, that my mind is diſmally out of tune; but time, and a change of ſcene, with a little bodily repoſe, to which I have been too great a ſtranger of late, may do much to tranquillize my ſpirits. I have taken a very long journey ſince I wrote; for I have been at my own houſe, and arranged all matters with my ſteward for a very long abſence. Heaven only knows when I may return to this iſland, perhaps never; but wherever I may exiſt, there, my dear Edmund, you will certainly have a faithful, though perhaps a very unhappy friend, in

Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

P. S. I thought of writing a few lines to my good Caroline: but, on reflection, I ſhall be ſilent, leſt I ſhould ſay too little or too much; and leſt I ſhould involve the excellent creature in new difficulties, and expoſe her to unpleaſant

unpleaſant ſuſpicions from her inflexible patroneſs. Be ſo good, however, as to inform this kind, anxious, humble friend of mine, that I am alive, and tolerably well. As to Cornelia, I ſhall not *perſecute* her with any meſſage whatever.

I promiſed you a full account of our very long and ill-concluded conference, and I have begun at times to throw ſome parts of it upon paper; but the impreſſion of the agonizing ſcene has recurred ſo ſtrongly upon my heart, in theſe attempts to deſcribe it minutely, that I have hitherto been able to make but little regular progreſs in my narrative. I have written however many detached parts of it, as they ſtruck my memory. It ſhall be my evening's employment, as I travel, to methodize theſe; and I will ſend you, in my firſt pacquet from the continent, a fair tranſcript of the whole. I muſt now bid you haſtily adieu; for my baggage is already on board, the wind is fair, and I am ſummoned.——My thoughts are already ſailed to Genoa. I cannot explain nor expreſs to you the paſſionate eagerneſs that I feel to hear again the touching voice of Giuliana. Farewell.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

THE reſtleſs wanderer, for whom, my dear Edmund, you will be too ſolititous, is ſafe at Lyons. I was eager to reach this city for various reaſons; and choſe, in the vain hope of amuſement, to take a new way of approaching it. At Calais I procured a French coaſting veſſel and landing at Rochelle, croſſed the country by the ſhorteſt road to Lyons. The ſea pleaſes my fancy at preſent much more than land. I had a curioſity to ſee this part of the French coaſt; and was ſomewhat amuſed in reflecting on the different ſcenes and characters that it brought to my memory. At the ſight of La Hogue I felt a momentary triumph, while imagination preſented to my view the ſplended ſhips of Tourville deſtroyed by the matchleſs bravery of our Engliſh ſailors. As we ſailed by Belleiſle, I could not help giving a ſigh; but it was a ſigh of envy, rather than compaſſion, to the ſhade of the accompliſhed Sir William Williams, repeating

ing with peculiar ſatisfaction, as my eyes were fixed on the little iſland,

" Here foremoſt in the dangerous paths of fame,
Young Williams fought for England's fair renown:
His mind each Muſe, each Grace adorn'd his frame;
Nor Envy dar'd to view him with a frown."

You remember Gray's ſpirited epitaph on this gallant young ſoldier.

What a capital advantage it is to have found an honourable place in the pages of an unperiſhing poet! I might have ſailed twenty times by Belleiſle without honouring the memory of Sir William Williams, had he not been immortalized by this epitaph.

In paſſing the iſle of Rhee, all the vanity and vices of Buckingham preſented themſelves to my thoughts; but when I landed at Rochelle, I forgot my own countrymen, in recollecting the brave Hugonots, and the horrid extremities they ſuffered here in defending themſelves againſt a barbarous perſecution. I think there is ſomething peculiarly ſoothing to the ſpirits in the gentle motion of a veſſel, and the mixture of ſea and land proſpect as you ſail along an extenſive coaſt. I found this part of my expedition much the moſt medicinal to my mind. When I began to be jolted in a chaiſe again, all my ſplenetic ſenſations returned with new force. The ſcenes as I paſſed, though they had the advantage of novelty, afforded me no amuſement. The ragged gaiety of the French peaſants, inſtead of tempting me to ſmile, filled me with a mixed emotion of pity and contempt. " Poor merry fools, ſaid I, ye have not ſenſe enough to perceive your own glaring misfortunes!"

Since

Since my arrival at Lyons, my harſh and untuned ſpirit has been a little ſoftened and diſciplined by an affecting circumſtance among the good people who were particularly kind to me and the poor Giuliana during my alarming illneſs in this city: there was a widow lady, a native of Switzerland, advanced in life, of an admirable underſtanding, and moſt engaging manners. Her only child, a very handſome and accompliſhed young fellow, had juſt got a commiſſion in the Swiſs ſervice; the firſt news I heard at my hotel was the luckleſs fate of this fine lad, who loſt his life about three weeks ago, in a ſudden fray concerning a beautiful girl of family and fortune, whoſe hand he had great hopes of obtaining. I felt myſelf bound in gratitude to pay a viſit of conſolation to his afflicted mother as ſoon as I heard of her calamity. Our unexpected meeting has, I truſt, been of great ſervice to us both. In catching the tenderneſs of her ſorrow, I have certainly corrected in ſome degree, the aſperity of my own mind; and if I have not reconciled her to her loſs by argument, I have at leaſt ſoothed her anguiſh by ſympathy. When ſhe related to me, with the frankneſs of true affliction, all her very bitter maternal ſenſations, I could not help exclaiming, "Would to Heaven, my dear Madam, that I could reſtore your ſon to you, by ſupplying his place in the grave! Such an exchange would be a bleſſing to us all, for my life has lately been made as wretched as his had the proſpect of being happy." I ſaid this to eaſe the fullneſs of my own heart, and to call off the mind of this deeply-feeling mother from her own poignant diſtreſs. The latter effect it produced

duced completely: for, ſtruck by the pathetic energy with which I had uttered this wiſh, ſhe caught hold of my hand, and conjured me to tell her what could have poiſoned the enjoyments of a perſon who, in recovering health, ſhe ſaid, ſeemed to have recovered every thing that could be wanting to enſure his felicity.

In the hope of diverting her ſorrow, I gave her my whole hiſtory. She liſtened to it with great attention, and made many ſenſible and friendly remarks as I proceeded. When I had finiſhed, ſhe expreſſed, with that touching eloquence which keen feelings generally inſpire, her admiration and her pity for Cornelia. "Good Heaven! ſhe exclaimed, to loſe ſuch a lover, and to loſe him from ſuch a motive, muſt be ſtill more excruciating than the death of a darling child; for if the beloved object is not ſo dear to her, which I think in nature it cannot be, yet in her caſe there is the dread of loſing it through all eternity. Have you, my dear Sir, have you ever cooly reflected on the horrors which this idea muſt impreſs on the heart of a tender, impaſſioned woman? Poor, poor Cornelia! ſhe is more miſerable than I am. My ſon was, I bleſs GOD, untainted by the wretched infidelity ſo common in the world; and I truſt a few years will reſtore us to each other in a better life. This bleſſed truſt is my ſupport; but what, my miſguided friend, what is there to ſupport your divine, yet deſolate Cornelia? What would the proſpect of Heaven itſelf be to me, if I had no aſſurance of meeting there the idols of my heart! yet, in one point of view, this lady for whom you have made me weep, though I thought my tears all exhauſted

or

or engroſſed by my own ſelfiſh ſorrow, ſhe, I ſay has ſtill one advantage over me: the GOD that ſhe and I worſhip has ceaſed to open the grave; he recalls no ſecond Lazarus from the tomb; but ſuch a miracle as might change her affliction into joy is ſtill frequently viſible on the earth.

Perhaps a day never paſſes in which his divine mercy does not recall to himſelf the alienated heart of ſome unbeliever. O that I could reward you for the generous intereſt you have taken in my affliction, by being in any degree inſtrumental to ſuch a bleſſed change in my young and moſt unfortunately miſguided friend! but, alas, ſhe added with a deep ſigh, I have ſeen in a brother of my own the intractable and obdurate pride which an early taint of Infidelity inſpires; and ſince the arguments and the tears of your angelic Cornelia were unable to convert you, I ſhould be vain indeed if I thought any thing that an afflicted old woman could urge to you might produce that effect. No, my dear, raſh friend, GOD only can produce it; and I moſt devoutly hope that he will." The good old lady uttered her pious hopes with ſuch an air of maternal tenderneſs and anxiety for my welfare, that I was affected almoſt to tears, and felt, for the firſt time in my life, that I had loſt a great deal in loſing my mother before I was old enough to comprehend the endearing charm of maternal ſolicitude and affection. I ſoon turned the converſation to other ſubjects, that I might ſay nothing offenſive to her friendly and devout ſpirit. We perfectly agreed in one ſerious ſentiment, that thoſe who die early ſeem to be the favourites of Heaven;

and

and we parted, both pleaſed and pained by each other, and both, I think, the better for our interview. For my part, I felt my mind, as I have already told you, much ſoftened; and I began to think of Cornelia with tenderneſs, admiration, and pity, inſtead of fierce diſdain and indignant reſentment. Indeed, this turn of mind had been already produced, in ſome degree, by my gradual recollection of all the tenderer paſſages in our long conference at Mr. Danvers's.—My ſoul was at firſt ſo full of indignation, for the bitter and unmerited inſult with which ſhe diſmiſſed me at your brother's door, tl at, in trying to throw all our diſcourſe on paper, I could for ſome time only recollect completely thoſe parts of it in which her bigotry and her pride were moſt conſpicuous; but, by degrees, every tenderer expreſſion occurred with new force to my recollection; and in the incloſed paper you will find a very faithful narrative, as I promiſed you, of our important conference. I will only detain you from it's peruſal while I make one very honeſt confeſſion, and it is this: I have peruſed the fair tranſcript I ſend you ſeveral times, and at every freſh reading I have, without ſhrinking from my own tenets, felt myſelf more and more enamoured of my lovely, eloquent, and tender zealot. Nay, I profeſs to you, I would inſtantly turn back and make her my own for life, if I could do it by any means that would not expoſe me to my own contempt; but, in my opinion, no man deſerves the poſſeſſion of ſuch exquiſite beauty, who will condeſcend to purchaſe it by playing the hypocrite or the fool; yet, ſuch is the folly or perverſeneſs of women

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in countries where they are free, that Beauty ſeems to be ſeldom obtained upon any other terms. Men are forced to play the fool for it, in ſome ſhape or other. I begin to think the Turks are the only ſenſible fellows in the management of the weaker ſex; ſo, if the divine Giuliana does not reconcile me to Europe, you may perhaps hear very ſoon that I am gone to pitch my tent with the Muſulmen; yet, as Oſman ſays in my Cornelia's favourite play,

"Their laws, their lives, their loves, delight not me."

Alas! like that generous and ill-fated Sultan, with the pureſt reliſh for the refined enjoyments of chaſte affection, and with the proſpect of having them within my graſp, I am deſtined perhaps to derive only wretchedneſs from her whom I fondly hoped to make the moſt happy, as I think her the moſt lovely of women; but, in ſpite of my wounded pride, I am ſtill, I perceive, playing the fooliſh lover on this paper, and continuing to prate to you of my miſtreſs, after proteſting that I would not ſay a ſyllable more. Adieu, my dear friend. I charge you, and the kind Lucy not to be too anxious about me. Yet write to me, I entreat you, and do not fail to let me know how Cornelia ſupports my abſence. If you direct to Genoa, your letters will certainly find

Your ſincere

and affectionate

SEYMOUR.

Incloſed

Incloſed in the preceding Letter.

An exact Account of my laſt conference with Cornelia.

YOU will recollect, my dear Edmund, that, in order to give my lovely invalid ſufficient time and tranquillity to recruit her ſpirits at Mr. Danvers's, I refrained from appearing there till after ſhe had dined. On my ſudden entrance, a ſmile of ſurprize, and I believe of tender ſatisfaction, illuminated her countenance. She ſeemed pleaſed to find me ſo familiarly acquainted with a worthy old clergyman. But when the parſon, who is a man of eager ſpirits, contrived, a little too rapidly perhaps, to leave us ſhut up alone in his little parlour, ſhe ſeemed to be alarmed, and would have quitted the room. Upon my humble ſupplication that ſhe would liſten with patience to many important things I had to ſay to her, ſhe ſat down with a placid dignity that filled me with a mixed ſenſation of awe and delight. I began by expreſſing my tender fears concerning the very delicate ſtate of her health and ſpirits. I ſaid that I had ſacrificed my higheſt joy in the daily ſight of her at your brother's to an idea ill-founded perhaps, yet certainly generous, that her mind might be more tranquil if I quitted

quitted the party. Here, Edmund, the lovely creature bluſhed immoderately, from a fear, I believe, that I alluded to her jealouſy of Louiſa. I ſoon relieved her from that apprehenſion, by ſhewing her I meant only that embarraſſment and inquietude which naturally ariſes between two people who have much to ſay to each other on the moſt delicate of ſubjects, and have not arrived at the period appointed for diſcuſſing it; I hoped that we might both be more tranquil in a ſhort ſeperation; but, on my ſide, I had felt all the pains of that egregious miſtake; the attempt to direct my thought to other objects had only convinced me that to paſs even a day from her was torment; that, finding my life a burthen to me, in the cruel ſuſpenſe I laboured under, I could no longer delay to ſolicit a promiſe of her hand; that my hopes were founded, not only on that ardent and perfect love which triumphs over fear, but on the animating aſſurances which I had received from many of our common friends, who conſidered us as happily formed for each other, and who had confirmed me in the bliſsful perſuaſion that my paſſionate attachment to her had awaked a tender partiality in her boſom, which I regarded as the pride of my life, and the baſis of my felicity. When I pauſed, and waited for her reply with an anxiety as intenſe as if her ſentence were to fix my eternal doom; inſtead of caſting her modeſt eyes towards the ground, ſhe fixed them upon mine with a look that ſeemed to ſcrutinize my ſoul, and, without any prudiſh efforts to force from me her hand, which I had fondly claſped, ſhe ſaid, "You know, my dear Sir, that I have profeſſed

ſeſſed to treat you with the frank and ingenuous tenderneſs of a ſiſter: my obligations to you are infinite; my eſteem and admiration of your character not inferior to that of the many friends by whom you are ſo zealouſly beloved. How far thoſe kind and well-meaning friends may have flattered and deluded you and themſelves in what they have ſaid on a proſpect of our union, is a point that muſt depend entirely on yourſelf." "Then you *will be mine*, angelic creature!" cried I, in a tranſport of frantic joy; for I conſtrued the laſt ſentence into an immediate conſent. "Pardon me, my too haſty friend, ſhe continued with a ſerious air that half petrified me, I have ſaid no ſuch thing. Do not, I conjure you, wreſt any of my words to a wrong meaning; and I promiſe you in return, that, difficult and painful as I find it is to ſpeak to you at large on this ſubject, I will yet endeavour to ſpeak to you with all that unequivocal openneſs of heart which conſtitutes in my opinion the eſſence of true friendſhip." I thanked her, kiſſed her hand, and continued to liſten in ſilent adoration. "I will not pretend, ſaid the dear ingenuous creature, to be angry with you for a ſtep which has however ſurprized me. It is natural for you to wiſh a ſpeedy termination to your ſuſpenſe. Indeed it is highly deſirable for us both that nothing like indeciſion ſhould appear between us. I have told you with great ſincerity, that it was my reſolution to live unmarried for the ſake of thoſe dear children who have the moſt engaging claims to my love, and have been peculiarly recommended to my care. Men are not apt, and I confeſs they have no great

great reaſon, to give entire credit to ſuch reſolutions. At a time when my ſolicitude for your life made me extremely anxious to tranquillize your agitated ſpirits, I gave you a promiſe, which, believe me, I ſhall never wiſh to retract, 'that you ſhall never ſee me the wife of another.' I will confeſs to you, my dear friend, that this was not a promiſe of mere pity, but of genuine affection. Yes, Seymour, I am not aſhamed to ſay that I love you, becauſe my reaſon has taught me to ſet bounds to my regard; and I can tell you with firmneſs, though not without pain, that I muſt and will reject your very flattering offer, becauſe there is an inſurmountable obſtacle to our union, which ſome late occurrences, and your own conſcious mind will explain to you." With my veins thrilling with rapture at the ſweet avowal of her love, I had caught her in my arms before ſhe uttered the ſteady and ſtern declaration that ſhe would not indulge it. "No, I exclaimed with mingled ſenſations of tranſport and of horror, there is no obſtacle—there ſhall be none; we are united by mutual love, the moſt ſacred of all bonds; and no powers in the world ſhall divide us." "There is a power more ſacred than Love, replied the ſtedfaſt angel; and it grieves me, Seymour, to the ſoul, to perceive it is a power that you do not acknowledge: I need not tell you, ſhe continued, that I mean Religion—a power which, I truſt, will ever regulate my conduct, and which forbids me to be your wife."

I endeavoured, though I believe very awkwardly, to treat her apprehenſions of my irreligion with levity; but the offended angel rebuked

buked me, and ſaid, "I beg, Sir, that our converſation may be ſerious; if you have no reſpect for Religion, you at leaſt profeſs yourſelf moſt inviolably attached to Truth and Honour; and indeed I muſt do you the juſtice to ſay, that I never knew any human being on whoſe generous veracity I could more implicitly confide: wretched indeed ſhould I feel myſelf at this moment, if I were deſtitute of that conſolatory confidence; but my eſteem for you, Seymour, is ſuch, that, I am firmly perſuaded, you have truth and magnanimity ſufficient to ſupport a weak woman againſt yourſelf. Inſtead of trying to delude me by any ſpecies of hypocriſy into a marriage, which muſt render us both wretched if our religious ſentiments are ſo widely different as I have reaſon to apprehend, you, I am convinced, will have the generoſity to avow that difference, if it exiſts, and to applaud my adherence to my duty in pronouncing it an inſurmountable obſtacle to our union." I thanked her for the noble confidence which ſhe placed in my truth; and aſſured her moſt ſolemnly, that I would never attempt to deceive her in any article whatever; ſtill repeating, that there is, and ſhall be, no obſtacle to our union.

Here, Edmund, the kind ſoul in her turn caught a ſudden ray of deluſive hope, by half conſtruing my words into a confeſſion of faith; and, looking at me with an angelic ſweetneſs of countenance, ſhe ſaid, "Can you, Seymour, can you truly affirm, that you revere and believe in that Religion which I have been taught to regard as the only ſure foundation of happineſs, both in this world and the next?"

I endeavoured

I endeavoured to evade the queſtion, by vindicating the freedom of thought, and the native rights of the mind, to keep any ideas ſecret that related only to Heaven and itſelf. But, ſhrinking from me with a face of horror, ſhe ſaid, "I know, Seymour, you are too noble to utter a direct falſhood; and do not, I intreat you, do not ſtoop to an evaſion; there is no neceſſity for any thing ſo foreign to your nature. I have no right to pry farther into your ſentiments; I have done with the ſubject for ever, and have only to pray, which I do moſt devoutly, that, however miſguided your early life may be, you may not end your days in this terrible deluſion." Here the tender enthuſiaſt caſt upon me a look ſo piteous, that, I believe, at that moment ſhe beheld me in her fancy hurried away from her by fiends, and ſinking into eternal perdition. The image, whatever it was, overwhelmed her; ſhe burſt into tears, hid her lovely troubled countenance for a few moments, and then endeavoured to quit the room. This, however, I could not ſuffer her to do. I detained her by paſſionate ſupplications. I conjured her not to be ſo flagrantly unjuſt as to condemn me unheard. I ſaid that ſhe had haſtily and cruelly adopted the moſt terrific ideas of my impiety from the baſe ſuggeſtions of a proud, phariſaical prieſt, who injured me in her opinion, becauſe, with a fooliſh goodnature to indulge his paſſion for wine, I had plunged into occaſional intemperance, which I had not a prieſtly ſtomach to bear. I was growing ſtill more ſevere againſt my ſanctified enemy Dr. Ayton, when Cornelia interrupted me with vehement diſpleaſure, and ſaid with an unuſual keeneſs of manner, "You

give

give me but too evident proofs of an unchriſtian ſpirit, in this aſperity againſt a worthy Divine, who did full juſtice to your many virtues, and only ſaid of your failings what his duty and his conſcience obliged him to ſay."—— I caught fire at this double inſult; this reproof to me, and panegyric on the man whom I have reaſon to deteſt. I reminded my ſevere monitor of the many diabolical injuries which theſe over-righteous zealots have committed in every age, under the ſtale pretences of their duty and their conſcience; and I proteſted that I had rather be the vileſt outcaſt of the world, abandoned by earth and Heaven, than one of theſe ſanctified dealers in ſlander, who poiſon the peace of their acquaintance by miſrepreſentations of men more honeſt than themſelves, and at the ſame time pretend to be the only true ſervants to the GOD of Truth. "This Divine, ſaid I, whom you commend, my dear Cornelia, ſo much beyond his deſert, has impreſſed a barbarous panic on your tender imagination; he has made you conſider me as a monſter of impiety; I am appriſed, you ſee the force of the brutal idea, and of the brutal expreſſion, with which he laboured to divide us; but I will appeal to your own honeſt heart, againſt your terrified imagination, except in that fatal night when intoxication bereaved me of my ſenſes, and when true charity would have caſt a veil over my frantic words and actions, have I ever merited this outrageous appellation? Nay, I will go much farther: I will conſent to reſt all my hopes on the iſſue of this candid queſtion; do you not think in your conſcience, from the perfect knowledge you have of my general character, that if you

bleſs me with your hand, my future life will be affectionate and virtuous?" "Ah, Seymour, ſaid the dear creature with a ſoft emotion in which Love and Terror were blended, you have ſuch inſinuating addreſs, that I muſt not liſten to you on a point in which it would prove ſo very fatal to me to have my weak reaſon overwhelmed or deluded. I ſhall be ever ready to do the moſt grateful juſtice to your many noble and engaging qualities; but I muſt never forget that it is my duty, and my determination, to proteſt, in the moſt deciſive manner, that nothing ſhall ever tempt me to become the wife of an infidel." I remonſtrated againſt the injuſtice of giving this title to any man who paid a decent regard to the eſtabliſhed Religion of his country. We ſkirmiſhed for ſome time on this ground, till at laſt, finding her inflexible, and being ſorely galled by ſome harſh things ſhe ſaid, I went to ſummon my reverend ally Mr. Danvers to my aid, and cheriſhed a little hope that I might be able, with his aſſiſtance, to give a more happy turn to the conteſt.

"Since, Madam, ſaid I, introducing my venerable old friend, ſince you are ſo cruelly deaf to every thing I ſay in my own favour, will you have the condeſcenſion to let this worthy man of GOD plead with you in my behalf? He does not reckon me a monſter of impiety, though a wretch of his order has baſely repreſented me as ſuch to you." "I am ſorry, Madam, ſaid the good Danvers, that many of our dignified clergy are ſo apt to forget that charitable meekneſs and indulgence, which would become them much better than the contemptuous and cruel pride with which they often treat perſons whom

they

hey ſuppoſe inferior to themſelves in holineſs, ecauſe their ſtation is different. I was once nearly branded as an Atheiſt myſelf by an offended Biſhop, becauſe I had the ſpirit in my young days to reſiſt an arbitrary abuſe of his epiſcopal privileges. I triumphed in the vindication of my character; but have ſuffered not a little, perhaps, in my eccleſiaſtical fortune. The rank of Mr. Seymour happily exempts him from being injured in the manner that we poor little parſons may be injured; yet if any cruel miſrepreſentation has prejudiced him in your good opinion, I will venture to ſay, my dear Lady, that ſuch prejudice is a greater misfortune to him than the loſs of the richeſt benefice in the kingdom could be to me; and I ſhall think myſelf happy indeed if I am able to redreſs the wrong that has been done, and to reinſtate him in your favour. For my part, I have ever regarded thoſe men as the moſt meritorious ſervants of GOD, who do, in proportion to their abilities, the greateſt number of good deeds; and I believe it would be difficult to find any man of Mr. Seymour's age, in the kingdom, who has been more diſtinguiſhed by acts of charity and munificence. For my own part I am bound to bear witneſs to his virtues as long as I exiſt, for he has ſaved one unhappy child of mine from impending deſtruction, and given efficacy and happineſs to the honeſt exertions of a ſecond. We have all the higheſt reaſon to bleſs him; and it would grieve me to the ſoul to ſee a lady ſo lovely, and ſo truly beloved as you are, make ſuch a ſuitor unhappy (perhaps for life) in conſequence of any religious prejudice againſt him, unworthily inſtilled into your tender mind." It

was in this manner, my dear Edmund, that my honeſt parſon began to trumpet forth my praiſes; while I watched every change in the varying features of Cornelia. Though ſhe liſtened to Danvers with more ſerenity than ſhe did to me, there was ſtill an air of trouble on her countenance, and inſtead of encouraging my advocate by a ſmile of acquieſcence in his panegyric, ſhe ſeemed to be collecting all the powers of her mind to ſupport a firm reſiſtance againſt the combined petitioners by whom ſhe ſaw herſelf ſo pertinaciouſly beſieged. From the expreſſion of her face while Danvers was ſpeaking, I expected a very tart reply; but here I was agreeably diſappointed. With that engaging and majeſtic mildneſs which is peculiar to herſelf, ſhe ſaid to my warm-hearted panegyriſt, "We are not likely, my good Sir, to differ on the generoſity of Mr. Seymour, to which it ſeems we have both of us very uncommon obligations. For my own part, I am willing to conſider it as a new proof of his generoſity towards me, that he has choſen a man of your age and character to be the arbitrator of the painful but important difference between us. For you, my worthy old friend, you are involved in a ſituation ſomewhat ſimilar to mine. I can feel for you, as I feel for myſelf; you are partly overwhelmed by a ſenſe of gratitude and attachment to Mr. Seymour, and yet will find yourſelf, as I am, under a bitter neceſſity to pronounce againſt him. I am confident that a man ſo reſpectable as you are for a long life of piety, will never adviſe me to accept as my huſband an enemy to the God whom you ſerve." "Heaven forbid!" exclaimed the ſpirited Danvers. If I were weak

and

end wicked enough to do ſo for any worldly emptation, believe me, Madam, I ſhould be, like the penitent and pious Cranmer, diſtracted by the ſenſe of my own infirmity, and eager to atone for it by martyrdom. But, on the other ſide, my dear lady, let us be cautious for Heaven's ſake, and not treat any perſon too haſtily as an enemy to God. Surely that very hard appellation cannot be juſtly applied to our generous friend. I ſpeak not with any reference to his bounty towards myſelf. There have been, GOD knows, many enemies of GOD, who have laviſhed their treaſure on his unworthy miniſters, but ſurely theſe men have been widely different in their characters and their purſuits from Mr. Seymour." Here, Edmund, the gentle Cornelia appeared confuſed; ſeemed to think ſhe had gone too far, and looked half-relenting. I would not interrupt my devout advocate, and only preſſed her hand in ſilence. "I will tell you, my dear Madam, very frankly, continued Danvers, that Mr. Seymour has confeſſed to me that his mind was never diſciplined and inſtructed, as it ought to have been, in the principles of our faith. Like moſt young men of his rank, he has hitherto thought too little or too lightly of our moſt important concerns; yet, inſtead of calling him an enemy to Religion, I ſhould rather call him its friend, ſince he expreſſes a great deſire to adopt more ſerious ideas, and ſince he purſues the moſt likely method to make him a good and religious man, by trying to connect himſelf with a lady ſo attached to her ſacred duties, and by promiſing that his children ſhall have the advantage, which he has unhappily wanted himſelf, of an early religious

education. Surely a man ſo benevolently diſpoſed will be gradually enlightened by the perfect knowledge of that Divine Maſter whom he is deſirous to know, and whom, when he has once truly known the beatitude of his ſervice, he can never forſake. Your virtue, my dear Madam, will have the glory and the delight of accompliſhing a work ſo angelic. Do not, therefore, I entreat you, by a precipitate rejection, exaſperate the high but well-diſpoſed ſpirit of an ardent young man, who loves you almoſt to diſtraction. Do not make him, what he has been too haſtily called, an enemy to Religion." Cornelia was ſo deeply affected by this unexpected intreaty from the good old Divine, that her gentle boſom began to heave with emotions that I was willing to ſuppoſe the effect of returning tenderneſs. As ſhe had hid her lovely impaſſioned countenance, I thought I had every reaſon to conſtrue her ſilence into conſent, and exclaimed with impetuous rapture, "My ſweet angel yields to your heavenly perſuaſion! ſhe will be mine! O thou worthy man of God, ſaid I, claſping the hand of the delighted Danvers, thou ſhalt ſpeedily complete thy bleſſed work. Here is an inſtrument that will authorize thee to unite us immediately for ever."

At theſe words, I drew the ſpecial licence from my pocket; but it ſeemed to turn into a warrant for my death, the moment I beheld the countenance with which the recovering Cornelia now gazed upon it. Her modeſt eyes lightened with indignation at the ſight. She accuſed me of preſumptuous vanity—of indelicate precipitation. She expreſſed a horror of ſeeing her name indecently and fradulently united

ed to mine in the public papers. In ſhort, ſhe diſcovered a degree of anger and reſentment that I thought her gentle ſpirit incapable of feeling upon any provocation; but as this was the mere anger of offended modeſty, which I had not meant to offend, I thought myſelf almoſt ſure of appeaſing it. I aſſured her with great truth, that I had taken effectual means to guard againſt a conſequence which had ſhocked her imagination ſo much; and that, ſo far from being really guilty of any intended offence to her delicacy, I was ready at that inſtant to pay it perhaps the higheſt compliment that was ever offered to that moſt amiable quality in woman, that if ſhe would only permit the excellent Mr. Danvers to read the ſervice to us, I would allow her, the moment it was ended, to baniſh me to any part of the globe, and for any period ſhe pleaſed—I would never claim her as my wife till the very hour arrived that ſhe ſhould herſelf appoint. I ſaid much on this topic, and with a romantic tenderneſs and ſincerity that entirely baniſhed her reſentment. She appeared indeed ſo much ſoftened, that my reverend ally, conceiving freſh hopes, began to renew his ſupplication; but, before he could finiſh a ſingle ſentence, a moſt deep and terrific ſigh burſt from her heart, and ſhe exclaimed, "O Danvers, Danvers, is it poſſible that you can deſert me! then Heaven is my only refuge; and Heaven inſpire me for my defence!" "Deſert you, Madam! cried the high ſpirited though ſimple Danvers, much galled by her expreſſion, Heaven is my witneſs, that I never yet deſerted man, woman, or child, in any kind of diſtreſs; and you, my dear Madam, would be the laſt perſon in the world to-

wards whom I could be tempted to act ſo diſhonourable a part. I may be deluded by my own gratitude; but I proteſt to GOD that I ſpeak unconſcious of any improper or ſelfiſh bias. I have adviſed you to accept my friend, and have given that advice, not from a ſordid motive, but upon a religious principle; becauſe I deem it our general duty rather to allure a well-meaning, though unſettled mind, to the true Religion, by gentleneſs and indulgence, than to drive it into confirmed infidelity by any rigorous treatment." "Forgive me, my venerable friend, ſaid Cornelia, extending her hand to Danvers with a ſweetneſs of manner peculiar to herſelf, forgive me, I entreat you; and be aſſured that I have the moſt perfect confidence in your integrity. The mild and Chriſtian principle which you have profeſſed does you honour as a miniſter to the GOD of mercy; but a little reflection will convince you, my good friend, that it cannot be applicable to my cruel ſituation. When you hear the arguments and the feelings which I have to oppoſe to your advice, and which render me inflexible in the reſolution I have taken, you, I am ſure, will never wiſh me to give my hand to any perſon who conſiders that Goſpel, by which we endeavour to regulate our lives, as a maſs of abſurdity and impoſture." "Barbarous, barbarous Cornelia! cried I, with a brain that ſeemed on fire with indignation, is it by cruelty alone that you can prove yourſelf a Chriſtian? But let me ſhew you, Madam, the baſeneſs, the inhumanity, of this treatment. I will ſuppoſe for a moment that ſuch an idea as you impute to me exiſts in my mind. Is it candid, is it charitable, is it juſt, that you ſhould violently tear open the receſſes

of

of my ſoul, force from thence any ſecret I would hide, and make it the oſtenſible ground of your argument againſt me? Let me ſhew you the unutterable barbarity of ſuch proceeding, by turning it back upon yourſelf. Let me ſuppoſe for an inſtant that you had a foible hid in your heart, which you would rather die than diſcover —let me ſuppoſe (forgive a vain ſuppoſition introduced only for argument)—let me ſuppoſe that you loved me with an affection ſo exquiſitely jealous that you could not ſee me throw an idle ſportive arm around a young damſel without being ready to faint at the ſight; would it be fair in me to argue, as you have argued, from the ſuppoſed foible of my antagoniſt? could I have a right to ſay, Madam, I have ſearched into your heart and ſoul, and you ought to marry me becauſe you will die with jealouſy if you refuſe? Yet, if I argued thus, I ſhould argue far leſs ungenerouſly than my Cornelia has now argued againſt me."—Here, Edmund, I muſt confeſs to you that my own heart began to revolt againſt my tongue; and though I could not recede, I felt that reſentment had hurried me too far, when I ſaw the deep and burning bluſh that ſeemed to drown all the features of Cornelia, when I hazarded my ſuppoſition, too cruelly founded on truth. As ſoon as her eloquent blood betrayed her emotion, ſhe hid her face from us. I pauſed for her reply, half aſhamed of what I had ſaid, and half terrified at her expected reproach. But here the gentle creature triumphed over me by language a thouſand times more powerful than the moſt vehement invective.

Removing her handkerchief from her lovely and half recovered countenance, ſhe turned to

the good aſtoniſhed old Divine, and ſaid to him, with an inconceivable tenderneſs of voice, "Mr. Danvers, I conſider you as a very kind and very indulgent father; I ſhall not therefore ſcruple to confeſs in your preſence all the weakneſs of a heart that is weak in the extreme; yet is ſtill, I truſt, ſupported by Heaven. Mr. Seymour, I find, is perfectly appriſed that my affection for him has run into great extravagance and folly. I am not angry with thoſe who have betrayed to him my infirmities, becauſe I know they have been influenced by the pureſt and moſt benevolent intentions, and becauſe I have no vain wiſh to appear in Mr. Seymour's eyes ſuperior to what I am, a very weak and fond woman. O Seymour, you accuſe me of cruelty and pride: I hope I never had thoſe qualities; but, if I had, I am now humbled in the duſt: this venerable, this indulgent judge of human frailties will pity and forgive me, while I own to you, to ſoften your exaſperated ſpirit, that you are as dear to me as my own ſoul Both he and Heaven, I truſt, will applaud me for adding, that you are not, and I am convinced you never can be, ſo dear to me as the more precious ſouls of my children!" This repeated and moſt ingenuous avowal of her love melted me into tears. I threw myſelf at her feet, and proteſted with great truth, that if her children had been my own I could not idolize them more than I do. I repeated all I had ever promiſed concerning their religious education. The good Danvers was greatly affected; and while he applauded Cornelia's maternal piety, expreſſed a hope that he ſhould yet live to ſee us forming the happieſt family in the world.—"Never,

Sir,

Sir, ſaid the ſighing, yet more and more reſolute Cornelia. There is a noble, romantic, yet dangerous, pride of ſpirit in Mr. Seymour, which renders him very unwilling to relinquiſh any opinions he has adopted; and he has been moſt unhappily led to think the Goſpel an impoſture. Good Heaven, how grievous it is, that a mind ſo generous, ſo tender, ſo apparently formed by nature to exult in the bleſſings of Chriſtianity, ſhould conſider the Prophets and Apoſtles of that Religion as a ſet of deſpicable deceivers.

" Whence, but from Heaven, could men unſkill'd
" in arts,
" In ſeveral ages born, in ſeveral parts,
" Weave ſuch agreeing truths? or how, or why,
" Should all conſpire to cheat us with a lie
" Unaſk'd; their pains ungrateful, their advice
" Starving their gain, and martyrdom their price?"

While the beautiful enthuſiaſt repeated theſe ſpirited verſes of Dryden, there was an angelic luſtre in her countenance, ſuperior to every thing that I ever beheld. Danvers and I ſtood almoſt entranced with admiration.—" Strange and terrible, continued the lovely preacher, as Infidelity appears to a tender and devout ſpirit, we ſee, alas! that it is dreadfully prevalent; and particularly among thoſe perſons of rank and fortune who are moſt likely to be the aſſociates of Mr. Seymour: and hence there can be little probability of an early change in his mind. Indeed I have read, in the works of one who had deeply ſtudied all human failings, and who judged of them with true Chriſtian tenderneſs, that impiety is of all mortal infirmities the moſt difficult

difficult of cure; becauſe the pride of incredulity, different from many dangerous paſſions, which naturally decline in the latter ſtages of life, ſprings afreſh in that ſeaſon, and is fortified by age*. You my dear unhappy Seymour, are probably deſtined to a long life; and it ſhall be my fervent prayer that you may prove an happy exception to this rule; but without any expectation that we can be ever united. I am convinced that we never can. And, believe me, in my firm rejection of your offers, however cruel you may call it, I am influenced by motives of kindneſs towards you, as well as by a ſenſe of my own duty. Were I your wife at this moment, I ſhould ſee you ſupremely wretched." Here I interrupted her with vehement proteſtations of her miſtake. But ſhe replied with a calm dignity, "Hear me patiently, I entreat you, Seymour, becauſe, ſince I have ingenuouſly laid open all the fond weakneſs of my heart to you, and to our venerable friend, I can now talk to you with an eaſe and confidence that I never could attain before; and I

* Note by the Editor.

Cornelia ſeems to have alluded here to the following paſſage in the eloquent Sermons of Maſſillon: "Il en eſt peu qui reviennent des routes égarées où l'impiété les conduit. L'on ne revient guères de la dépravation impie de la raiſon. Les années muriſſent les paſſions, mais l'orgueil de l'incrédulité renait et ſe fortifie avec les années. Plus les années deviennent ſerieuſes, plus elles donnent du crédit, et une ſorte de bon air á la philoſophie de l'impiété; et la vieilleſſe eſt le tems où l'impie s'en fait plus d'honneur, et où elle lui attire auſſi plus d'éloges de la part de ſes imitateurs." Paraphraſe de Pſeaume XIII.

am

am perſuaded I ſhall make you though not a convert to Religion (would to Heaven I could!) yet a convert to the propriety and to the kindneſs of my conduct. I muſt repeat and maintain what I have ſaid: you muſt be wretched were I your wife; becauſe you muſt ſee me haunted by terrors that you could neither cure nor condemn. I ſhould not only feel that painful ſolicitude for your eternal felicity which I muſt ever feel, however divided from you; but I ſhould be diſtracted by an inceſſant dread that my dear boys, who, as they grew up, muſt naturally look to you as

" The glaſs of faſhion, and the mould of form,
" Th' obſerv'd of all obſervers;"

would imperceptibly catch from you that impiety which you would be too generous to teach them. They would laugh at their poor credulous devout mother; and, tainted by the infectious though unavowed ſpirit of the alluring infidel they would plunge——— O GOD! my whole heart is convulſed with anguiſh at the bare idea of this univerſal miſery. No, Seymour, whatever agonies I may endure in tearing myſelf from you, nothing ſhall ever tempt me to incur the hazard of proving the bane, the perdition, of my children! You, my good Danvers, you will no more adviſe me to a marriage that offers ſuch a proſpect to the keen preceptions of a mother." " No, my dear Madam, cried the deeply affected old man; I would ſooner forfeit all the bleſſings I owe to the bounty of Mr. Seymour, and all the little property I poſſeſs in the world, than urge you to act in oppoſition to the dictates

dictates of your own angelic ſpirit, and of that Heaven by whom you ſeem to be inſpired."—The honeſt old man was quite overwhelmed by this ſcene; and having kiſſed the hand of Cornelia, and bathed it with his tears, he quitted the room, to tranquillize or to conceal the viſible diſorder of his nerves. For my own part, I was not ſo much ſoftened by her maternal tenderneſs, nor even by the frank confeſſion of her love to me, as I was galled, mortified, and exaſperated, by her ſaintly pride, and determinate rejection of my hand. As Danvers was going out of the room, ſhe had deſired him to order her chaiſe; and though the old man, in a broken voice, had begged her to ſtay the night, ſhe peremptorily refuſed, and preſſed for the carriage immediately. This contributed to increaſe my ſpleen, my reſentment, my depreſſion. I ſat confounded and ſtupified with a thouſand wretched ſenſations. The poor Caroline came in to us, trembling in her turn at the proud ſaint's diſpleaſure. But to Caroline ſhe was all goodneſs—pardoned her for her ſhare in the conſpiracy, and renewed her commands for the carriage. This obſtinate reſolution to depart provoked me to upbraid her for her pride: but, by an affectionate rebuke, ſhe reduced me to kneel, and aſk her forgiveneſs. She forgave me; but was reſolute to go. This rendered me half frantic again; and at laſt, aſtoniſhed, and almoſt petrified at her inflexibility, I ſat ſilent and motionleſs, while ſhe bade me farewell, and haſtened to her chaiſe.

All

All the ſubſequent occurrences, my dear Edmund, I have related to you already. I ſhall therefore cloſe this long narrative by obſerving, that the whole adventure appears to me rather as a wild and troubled dream than as a ſeries of incidents that have really paſſed. What influence they may have on my future life, Heaven only knows. At preſent I pity Cornelia, and pity myſelf. Our ſtrong mutual affection has made us both completely uncomfortable; nor can I ſee any clear proſpect that we ſhall ever conduce to the happineſs of each other.

"Tantum Religio potuit ſuadere malorum."

"Such deviliſh acts Religion could perſuade."

Theſe, I think, are the words of poor Creech, in tranſlating this celebrated line: but if they are ſo, he tranſlated like a booby; and his language is too groſs to be applied, even by offended paſſion, to my dear and delicate, though inflexible, Cornelia.

LETTER

LETTER XV.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

I AM once more, my dear Edmund, in Genoa, after paſſing a road whoſe mountainous horrors ſurpaſſed every thing that I was led to expect from report; and I had choſen it in one of my darkeſt humours, becauſe ſuch a road

"Suited the gloomy habit of my ſoul."

My perverſe ſtars ſeem to be determined that I ſhall no more enjoy any pleaſures of a more chearful and tender ſort. After paſſing the dreary and hideous mountains between Antibes and this city, which compleatly ſatiated my appetite for ſavage ſcenery, my mind began to fix itſelf, with an eager, fond, and pleaſant expectation, on the ſmiling welcome of the ſweet Giuliana, by which I thought myſelf ſecure of being ſpeedily refreſhed, conſoled, and re-animated. Judge, Edmund, of my bitter blank vexation, when, inſtead of the friendly faces of the good Seignor Pinelli and his lovely daughter, I found only a poor old woman, who told me, in words that ſounded more diſmal to my ear than ever human voice did before, that the family were all gone to viſit a relation in the neighbourhood

neighbourhood of Rome; that they talked of extending their excurſion to Venice; and perhaps they might travel ſtill farther before they returned. I feel diſpoſed to purſue them round the world; for I have loſt all reliſh for common ſociety; my feelings and affections ſeem to be half-palſied; and I have, I think, no deſire alive, except a paſſionate, yet, believe me, not an amorous deſire, to ſee and converſe with Giuliana.

As to my ſolicitude concerning the ſanctified Cornelia, it grows leſs and leſs, in proportion as I ſuffer more and more from her ſaintly pride. A woman who can ſo triumphantly command her affections will never ſuffer much from the abſence of any man, however dear to her he in his hours of vanity may ſuppoſe himſelf. Few women, indeed, have ſufficient energy of heart to feel real Love, according to my ideas of that ſublime paſſion; for I think of it as Oſman does in Cornelia's favourite tragedy; and I might ſay to her, with a little variation, in the words of the Sultan,

> "I can believe you hate, ſince you have power to love with moderation."

But love I ſhall endeavour to baniſh from my thoughts; and think only of my ſweet friend Giuliana. As this city appears to me a mere deſert ſince ſhe is not here, I am haſtening to quit it, and hope to ſurprize the dear travellers at Fraſcati, where I underſtand they are reſiding at preſent. You will forgive my being ſo laconic, as I am preparing to fly with eagerneſs to a ſpot which is hallowed in my imagination by the

the retirement of Tully and the birth of Metaſtaſio; a ſpot which, in my days of tranquillity, I have eagerly viſited on that account; but which I am now impatient to reach from motives yet ſtronger, becauſe I hope to meet there, not the ſpirits of Tully or of Metaſtaſio, but friends, in whoſe converſation I may find the dignity of the philoſopher, and the ſweetneſs of the poet.

My good-humour is beginning to revive in this expectation; and, in bidding you adieu, I muſt add, becauſe I know it will give you pleaſure, that my heart feels, at this moment, leſs heavy than it has done at any time ſince I reached the Continent. But, however loaded or lightened that heart may be in the courſe of my rambling, be aſſured it will ever be full of the kindeſt good wiſhes to you and your ſiſter.

Direct to me at Rome; and believe me, in all places,

Your moſt affectionate

SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XVI.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER.

MY DEAR EDMUND,

THE joy that I felt in returning to my own comfortable houſe, from the deſolate manſion of poor Verney, has been grievouſly damped, by the clouds of trouble in which I found my good Harriot involved: her generous anxiety for my quiet had kept me, till I returned, a perfect ſtranger to all the late vexatious occurrences. I am inexpreſſibly grieved to find that my prophetic fears of your precipitate, yet ſtill intereſting friend, have been ſo painfully realized. I am ſtill more anxious, if poſſible, than ever, to ſave him from himſelf, the worſt of all enemies; and indeed the only enemy, as I think you once told him, that he has to fear. Our incomparable Cornelia has behaved, I underſtand, like an angel, in a trial infinitely too ſevere for a frame ſo delicate. Heaven grant that we may not have to ſay of this trial,

"The ſaint ſuſtain'd it, but the woman died!"

I own to you, that her countenance alarms me for her life, though her attentive and quick-ſighted

ſighted friend Harriot aſſures me that her appearance is greatly mended within the laſt fortnight, and is confident in the hope of her perfect recovery. In ſome private converſation which I have had with the lovely ſufferer, ſhe has affected me with more compaſſion, I think, than I ever felt for a human creature before. Though ſhe is unſhaken in her opinion as to the religious rectitude of her conduct, and though ſhe was highly gratified by the hearty and affectionate applauſe that I beſtowed on her maternal virtue; yet an inceſſant dread that her rejection of Seymour may hurry this impetuous young man into thoſe vices from which he was uncommonly free, preys upon her heart. She expreſſed her apprehenſions to me in language ſo eloquent and pathetic that ſhe made me feel them in all their force, while I laboured with little ſucceſs to inſpire her with more chearful expectations. Indeed her fears are too well grounded: there is nothing, I think, more to be dreaded than the fiery ſpirit of a young man who has failed in any plan of virtuous happineſs. A revolt to the powers of vice, in theſe caſes, is frequent, I believe, in every rank of life; for moſt mortals, who mean honeſtly, think they have ſuch a right to be happy, that when they find their good moral projects produce not this effect, they haſtily conclude that the world is governed by chance, and are content to follow a guide and ruler who, though allowed to be blind, is ſuppoſed to be irreſiſtible.

But not to moralize too long, my dear Edmund, let me haſten to impart to you an idea which I think worth purſuing in the preſent ſtate of affairs. It ſtrikes me, that you might afford

afford great relief to the tenderly anxious ſpirits of Cornelia, that you might recover and confirm your own altered health, and finally, that you might render moſt eſſential ſervice to your very engaging, but wild rambling friend, by taking a ſudden trip to the continent. What delight would it give to your grateful ward Giuliana to be ſurpriſed, in Genoa, by an unexpected viſit from her Engliſh guardian! and from how many rocks may you have a chance of ſaving your rapid and much-endangered friend, who is driven forth on a ſtormy ſea, not only without the important ballaſt of Religion, but with a very ſcanty freight of prudence and diſcretion! Pray think of this hint ſpeedily and ſeriouſly; you can eaſily ſend Lucy to us, who is, you know, always welcome, and we flatter ourſelves very willing, to reſide under our roof. If your finances are not perfectly ſuited to foreign travel, there is a ſum at my banker's ſufficient to conduct you round Europe, and it ſhall be devoted to anſwer your drafts in the excurſion I recommend to you. I need not add, that no mode of employing this money can afford me ſo much pleaſure; and that, by allowing me to miniſter to your convenience, you will in truth confer a moſt agreeable obligation upon

Your affectionate brother.

Harriot, with her love to you and Lucy, very ardently joins in my requeſt; and even Cornelia has the frankneſs to ſay, it would give her infinite

infinite ſatisfaction to know that the impetuous Seymour had with him a friend and counſellor ſo calm and conſiderate as you are.

LETTER XVII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

GONE from Fraſcati too! How malignant are my ſtars to all my expectations! Yet my ſtars do not ſeem, my dear Edmund, at preſent to be, as Shakeſpeare ſays, "the moſt maiden-"ly ſtars in the firmament;" for they have twinkled upon me ſo wantonly; they have led and lighted me in ſuch an adventure! But huſh —ſtand with your finger on your lips, like the God of ſecrecy and ſilence, and you ſhall hear of ſuch a nightly exploit as might have converted the moſt rigid worſhiper of Diana into a votary to Venus.

I thought all my warm blood had been turned into gall or phlegm; but Nature choſe to vindicate

cate her rights; and accident convinced me of my miſtake.

On my arrival here, I felt not a little chagrined in finding only the good old aunt of Giuliana, to whoſe houſe I had been directed.—My friends of Genoa are again on the wing; but they are expected here in about three weeks; and this very polite old lady preſſed me moſt cordially, when ſhe heard my name, to await under her hoſpitable roof the return of her relations. This I declined as civilly as I could, promiſing to be with her again at the time ſhe mentioned; and, chuſing to paſs the interim at liberty, to amuſe myſelf in excurſions to Rome, and in any fanciful purſuits that the intereſting ſcene around me could ſuggeſt. But chance ſoon threw in my way a magnet more attractive than the politeneſs of my old lady. In returning to my inn from her houſe, which ſtands at a little diſtance from this pleaſant town, I paſſed another ſingle houſe, with a ſmall but charming garden, on the ſlope of this chearful hill. At the door of this houſe ſtood a ſplendid carriage, and juſt as I reached it an elderly man of a dignified appearance leaped into it, with eyes that ſparkled with fury, and was driven rapidly towards Rome. This circumſtance led me to caſt a curious eye round the houſe he had juſt left; and at an upper window, which looked obliquely upon me, becauſe it was within the garden-wall, I beheld the moſt faſcinating of all ſights, a young and beautiful female in tears. Our eyes met, and ſeemed to underſtand each other. As there happened to be nobody near me, I ſtood gazing on the lovely ſtranger, not with looks of impertinent curioſity, but of the

the moſt tender compaſſion. I endeavoured to explain to her, by geſture, my very ardent deſire to aleviate her affliction. She made a ſignal, in return, which ſeemed to bid me wait; and diſappeared from the window. My heart was now thrown into all the tumultuous ſenſations of fond ſolicitude and ſuſpenſe. I looked anxiouſly to the window, and ſoon beheld the beauty who had vaniſhed returning, like the ſun, with increaſing luſtre. Though her ſituation rendered it difficult to convey any thing to me, becauſe, as I have told you, the garden-wall was between us, ſhe contrived to throw, with great force and dexterity, a circular billet at my feet; for the dear ingenious creature, to make her paper heavy enough to reach me, had wrapped it round a ſilver medal of the Pope. I was charmed with her contrivance; and you muſt not pretend, my dear monitor, to reprove me, ſince you ſee that our loves commence under the guidance of his Holineſs.——What ſtrange things happen in this odd world! and how little did I ever expect to kiſs the image of a Roman Pontiff with more than Catholic devotion! Yet this I now did, as the moſt expreſſive anſwer that I could give on the ſpot to the tender inviting billet which the Holy Father had ſo faithfully wafted to my hand. This billet was written with great ſpirit, and in good Italian. It ſaid, "that if I had ſenſibility and courage enough to venture through many dangers, to hear and pity the diſtreſſes of an oppreſſed and unfortunate girl, I ſhould take my ſtation at midnight near a door at the bottom of the ſloping garden, and a very truſty old woman would lead me to the perſon for whom I had appeared

peared to feel ſo much generous and conſolatory compaſſion." Here was a temptation, my dear cautious philoſopher, which I think even your diſcreet worſhip could not have reſiſted, eſpecially had you heard, as I did at my inn, that the houſe to which I was ſo enchantingly invited had been lately taken by a whimſical old nobleman of Portugal, a Don Manoel Coutinho, who is deſcribed as half a great genius and half a madman: he is a Scholar, an Antiquary, a Medalliſt, a Fencer, a Fidler, a Mechanic, a Chemiſt, and, above all, a Voluptuary. He has been in all parts of the world, and ſpeaks all languages. The accounts I hear of him put me in mind of the Scottiſh wonder, the admirable Creichton, and of our Wortley Montague: he ſeems to be a compound of thoſe two extraordinary characters; and if report ſays true, he underſtands every thing, except how to confer happineſs on a young and beautiful girl:

"Though not a ſcience, fairly worth the ſeven."

However the enterprizing and univerſal Don Manoel thought himſelf equal to this branch of knowledge, as he lately brought off from Venice a young creature, who may be juſtly reckoned the moſt conſummate model of voluptuous beauty that Nature ever exhibited, even in the country where ſhe is moſt laviſh of thoſe alluring exhibitions. Such was the report, my dear Edmund, that I heard of my fair *incognita* and her tyrant, who is ſo barbarouſly jealous of his lovely treaſure that he keeps her like a ſtate-priſoner; and yet is ſo vain of her charms, that once, they ſay, he wanted to diſplay them in

the condition of a new created Eve, to a ſet of licentious and half-intoxicated gueſts at his table. The beautiful Venetian, whoſe name is Violante, and who, in ſpite of a villainous education, is truly more modeſt than vain, revolted againſt this propoſal; and has been more barbarouſly treated, in conſequence of a virtue which a voluptuary more refined than the old tyrannical Portugueſe would have conſidered as her capital charm. You will eaſily ſuppoſe, my dear Edmund, that, as my fancy was inflamed by this hiſtory, I flew with ardour to my aſſignation. I will ſpare both you and myſelf a relation of the unpleaſant and humiliating ſteps that I was forced to take, to reach in ſafety the apartment of my charmer; and only briefly ſay, that, after paſſing through the darkneſs of Tartarus, I was at laſt very happily uſhered into Elyſium. I muſt not, however be ſuch a hypocrite as to inſinuate, that the joys I found here were all of the ſpiritual kind. No, my dear philoſopher, it was a ſcene that would have annihilated the continence of a Scipio. Repreſent to yourſelf a young beauty, not yet eighteen, more exquiſitely, more voluptuouſly faſhioned, in voice, in feature, in form, than any girl that your eyes ever beheld; repreſent her provoked by an old tyrant who had abſolutely beat her, and pleaſed by a young adventurer who had freely hazarded his life for the pleaſure of ſoothing her affliction. The lovely creature was not ungrateful. But I will not tantaliſe your philoſophy, by any glowing deſcriptions of the tranſcendently beautiful and extatic Violante. Nor is it her perſon alone that I am charmed with; ſhe has a heart, mind, and ſoul, fully equal

equal to her exquiſite form. My cautious mo-nitor will tell me, that I can be no judge of theſe in my preſent ſituation, as I view them all through a very illuſive medium. Granted, my dear philoſopher; yet, as our friend Prior ſays:

"Howe'er, 'tis well that while mankind
In Fate's perverſe meander errs,
We can imagin'd pleaſures find,
To combat againſt real cares."

At all events, Violante is too good for the old barbarian who has her now in his power; and I have ſome unſettled thoughts of contriving her eſcape, and tranſporting her to England. What ſay you my dear Edmund? will you receive the admirable creature as a new tenant for your emp-ty cottage? ſhe is not, I confeſs, ſo angelic as Giuliana; but ſhe has her merits, believe me, and her failings are only ſuch as ariſe from her cruel deſtiny, and not from her natural charac-ter. But it would be no eaſy matter to accom-pliſh her freedom. The old Don is a fellow of deſperate vigilance and dexterity. He might, indeed, have made an excellent magician in darker times; for Violante ſhewed me many wonderful ſpecimens of his rare ſkill both in me-chaniſm and chemiſtry. She reckons him little leſs than an abſolute conjuror, and has therefore I believe, double delight in out-witting him. Nothing is ſo dangerous as an attempt to go-vern a woman by cunning; it always provokes her to foil her governor with his own weapons. Violante, I believe, would be the moſt open-hearted and faithful creature in the world to a man who treated her with kindneſs and confi-

dence. But you ſhall hear more of her as we grow more intimate. We ſhall have frequent opportunities to cultivate our acquaintance, becauſe the old Seignior paſſes two or three nights every week in Rome, where he is reported to be carrying on many deep and ſecret machinations. He has certainly ſome private reaſon for not taking Violante with him; and he leaves her under the guard of an old truſty Portugueze ſecretary, uncommonly devoted to the ſervice of his maſter, who delivered him from the gripe of the Inquiſition; a benefit, indeed, that ought never to be forgotten; and I ſhall not therefore attempt to corrupt this dependant, truſty Argus, as he is. I have luckily eluded his eyes, and may contrive perhaps hereafter to bear off the treaſure that he is commiſſioned to watch. However this may be, take care, I beſeech you, that the private hiſtory I now ſend you may never reach the ear of Cornelia; for, if ſhe retains any great affection for me, which I can hardly ſuppoſe, I ſhould be ſorry to mortify and inſult it. Fooliſh, obſtinate bigot! what would I not have given, to have made her as happy for life, as I made for ſome hours the more beautiful, yet ſtill leſs attractive, Violante! Deuce take this involuntary reflection! it has half-poiſoned my raptures, paſt and to come: and ſince my ſpleen is thus unexpectedly awakened, the kindeſt thing, my dear Edmund, that I can do by you is, to bid you abruptly farewell. So believe me ever

Your affectionate

SEYMOUR.

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

FROM MISS TO MR. AUDLEY.

MY DEAR BROTHER,

IT was ſurely a good angel who ſuggeſted to you the idea of recommending to our dear Edmund an immediate excurſion to Genoa. I moſt cordially hope that he will embark for that excurſion before many days elapſe, and not ſo much for the friendly purpoſe which you have in view, as to alleviate his own particular diſtreſs; for I grieve to tell you, that he is at this moment one of the moſt diſtreſſed beings that you ever beheld. A dreadful incident has happened in our neighbourhood, which, though I truſt it will ultimately be the means of giving tranquillity to his life, has affected him ſo deeply in the inſtant, that he is utterly incapable of writing even to you. Indeed, my nerves have been as much ſhaken as his; but, as my heart is leſs concerned, I have greatly recovered myſelf, and ſhall haſten to relieve you from the alarm which this opening of my letter will, I know, occaſion in you and our dear ſympathetic Harriot.

Though you are both of a nature too noble to pry into the ſecrets which decency and diſcretion would keep as much as poſſible out of ſight, I know, by ſlight hints which have fallen from you both, that you are apprized of what our dear Edmund wiſhed to think an impenetrable myſtery, revealed only to me: I mean, his long and incorrigible indulgence in the pleaſures of illicit love. Alas! how heavy a price is paid for thoſe pleaſures, even by the ſex which is ſuppoſed to obtain them on the moſt eaſy and advantageous terms! To our poor afflicted Edmund they have proved, what I fancy they prove to moſt men, a very unquiet dream, ending abruptly in a ſtart of horror. But to my mournful ſtory: As death, the great diſcoverer of latent foibles, has now utterly torn in pieces the half-tattered veil of ſecrecy, I am at full liberty to tell you, that the unhappy though alluring object of Edmund's clandeſtine attachment was a beautiful girl of this country; ſhe was the daughter of a reputable farmer; but, like moſt of the farmers' daughters in our days, ſhe was little occcupied in the ſalutary labours of ruſtic life. The univerſal paſſion for dreſs and ſentiment very early ſeized on this lively damſel: inſtead of carrying her butter and eggs to the neighbouring market town, ſhe never went thither but to purchaſe gauze, and cram her pocket with novels from the circulating-library. From theſe ſhe ſoon learned to conſider Love as the only buſineſs of life; and thus diſpoſed, about ten years ago ſhe caſt her eyes upon Edmund. He reſembled the hero of her favourite romance: ſhe contrived to throw herſelf alone in his way in a ſweet ſhady lane;

one

one romantic ſtep led to another; and, after a few ſentimental meetings, the ſad old ſenſual and common cataſtrophe enſued. The only extraordinary part of their amorous hiſtory is this: although the poor idle girl, whom Edmund diſtinguiſhed by the whimſical title of Sylvia, made the firſt overtures, ſhe has been inviolably faithful, though extremely capricious, in a connexion of many years: yet their intercourſe has been attended with a ſufficiency of troubles. The uſual miſchief happened very early; and poor Edmund, who has naturally a tender conſcience, was half-diſtracted with the idea of deſtroying the peace of an honeſt unſuſpecting father: but Providence prevented the ſcene of paternal anguſh, which had terrified the imagination of the two delinquents. The old farmer finiſhed his days without ſuſpecting the condition of his child. Poor Sylvia had no mother; and by the charitable aſſiſtance of an aunt (the humble widow of an humble Divine) ſhe avoided public diſgrace, and produced a daughter, which Edmund has reared with the utmoſt privacy, and only viſited as miſers viſit their hidden gold.

After the birth of this lovely infant, he reſolved to break the connexion; but, philoſopher as he calls himſelf, he found that this project, though ſtrongly recommended both by virtue and prudence, was much eaſier in theory than in practice. Sylvia, more beautiful and more fond than ever, ſettled herſelf with her aunt in a neat, little, retired houſe, but a very few miles from us. Humanity required that Edmund ſhould ſometimes carry her accounts of the child, whom ſhe was allowed to ſee very rarely, and by

ſtealth. Alas! this humanity, my dear Audley, with mortals leſs virtuous or leſs happy than you are, is apt to lead them, even with their eyes open, into ſad follies; it led our dear brother to hamper himſelf more and more in this attachment, which he clearly ſaw was unfriendly to his comfort, his tranquillity, his reputation. Fortunately no new incumbrances aroſe in the ſhape of children: at times many good reſolutions were formed, but frailty, paſſion, and habit, prevailed againſt them. Spinſter as I am, I feel myſelf a little bound to argue, as far as I decently may, in extenuation of our dear Edmund's frailty; becauſe I really believe that I have been, though very innocently, inſtrumental to its continuance. I believe his very kind deſire to ſooth my troubled mind, and to give me a houſe to manage, when I was ſo bitterly diſappointed of one that I expected to call my own, prevented his thinking ſeriouſly of a wife at the moſt proper ſeaſon, and of courſe had a tendency to prolong his reſtleſs bondage, under the half-tender and half-tyrannical Sylvia.—— However this may be, they have maintained a ſecret intercourſe for ſeveral years, in which their diſquietude and their vexation have far exceeded their tenderneſs and their pleaſure, if I may credit the poor frail philoſopher, who, for my edification, confeſſes to me all his weakneſs, though he will ſeldom follow my ſage advice. At laſt, indeed, he had reſolved on a thorough reform. Tired to death of the ſpleen, and diſcontent of his wayward and querulous Sylvia, he had exhorted her to ſettle in a mode of life whoſe advantages

advantages ſhe would often enumerate with envy. He was ready to ſacrifice his own pleaſure to her happineſs, or her tranquillity: ſhe might marry whenever ſhe choſe it; and his generoſity would facilitate that event. After a million of debates, bitter ſquabbles, and tender reconciliations, on this wide field of argument, all things were at length adjuſted; and poor Sylvia, to improve her temper, was to be conſigned to a huſband. She had an ardent admirer in her own rank of life, who, being frankly informed of her paſt life, very generouſly perſevered in his addreſſes; the day of marriage was appointed, an event that filled me, I confeſs, with ſtrange mingled ſenſations of gladneſs and terror; of gladneſs, becauſe I had long wiſhed to ſee the poor enthralled Edmund ſet free; and of terror, becauſe I clearly perceive, that, although his reaſon rejoiced in the proſpect of this freedom, his paſſions were in ſuch a ſtate that they might induce him to ſpurn the bleſſing in the very moment when he ſeemed to have ſecured it. While affairs were in this anxious ſituation, our whole country was aſſembled at the great fair in our neighbourhood.—Sylvia attended her deſtined huſband, young Evans, to this motley ſcene of buſineſs and merriment. As neither Edmund nor I wiſhed to be there, we intended to remain comfortably at home, and give the ſervants an opportunity of enjoying the gay ſpectacle by themſelves. A meſſage from our neighbour Mrs. Clayfield diſconcerted our quiet plan. Being confined herſelf by indiſpoſition, and her huſband being abroad, ſhe requeſted me to take

her daughter Charlotte to the puppet-ſhow. Edmund, whoſe good-nature is always ready to gratify a child, ordered our chaiſe, and rode with me and my happy little charge to the fair. We were all not a little mortified to find ourſelves too late; the booth of exhibition was ſo crammed that it could not even admit another infantine ſpectator. Poor little Charlotte began to cry at the diſappointment; but ſoon dried and forgot her tears, on being told, that the puppet-ſhow would begin again before it was time for us to go home, and then ſhe might depend on ſeeing it. It was indeed a providential bleſſing to us that we were not admitted among the firſt audience. The maſter of this canvas theatre, to collect the more money, had built ſomething like boxes, and an upper gallery; but this ſtructure was ſo haſtily and ill prepared, and ſo overloaded, that part of it gave way. As we were ſauntering about a hundred yards from the great booth, we heard a moſt horrible outcry, and ſoon beheld ſeveral men and women ruſhing forth in great conſternation. The firſt report was, that many perſons were cruſhed to death by a fall of the ſcaffolding. Edmund inſtantly put me and the child into the chaiſe, and begged us to wait while he ran to enquire into the real extent of the calamity. Think, Audley, what our dear brother's agony muſt have been, when he found that the firſt unhappy ſufferer brought forth from the ruins was poor Evans, hideouſly disfigured and quite dead. Edmund plunged, as he has ſince told me, with a frantic impulſe, into the croud, and overſet ſome of the perſons employed in bring-

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ing out a female figure; it was poor Sylvia, with a frame moſt deplorably ſhattered and almoſt ſpeechleſs; yet ſhe poſſeſſed her ſenſes; and at the ſight of Edmund faſtened one hand (which was all ſhe could move) upon him, with a ſhriek of anguiſh and affection. He brought her to the chaiſe, and having with great difficulty got her into it, and offered a reward to any man who could moſt expeditiouſly bring a ſurgeon to the houſe of her aunt, he placed himſelf by the ſide of the poor half-expiring ſufferer, and drove from us, promiſing to ſend the chaiſe back immediately for Charlotte and me: for this, however, we did not wait; as a friend of Mrs. Clayfield's conveyed both the child and me to our reſpective homes. I now paſſed ſome hours of the moſt melancholy ſolicitude and ſuſpenſe, wiſhing to do every thing for the beſt, and yet doing nothing, for fear of doing wrong. At laſt the chaiſe returned, with a requeſt from Edmund, that it might bring me immediately to him. You will eaſily believe that I felt no prudiſh ſcruples at ſuch a moment. I could willingly have ſacrificed reputation to alleviate the horrid ſufferings of this poor dying creature. But, alas! I had not the mournful ſatisfaction of finding her alive. The ſurgeon and I were both too late. I found my brother in the fondeſt agonies of grief, and preſſing in his arms the breathleſs object of his love. Yet my arrival afforded him great relief. He roſe eagerly, to tell me with what admirable expreſſions of piety and affection the hapleſs girl had expired. She bleſſed GOD, he ſaid, that poor Evans had ſuffered none of thoſe bodily

bodily tortures which had fallen juſtly on her. She conſidered the dreadful event as ordained by Providence to ſave that worthy young man from much impending miſery, and herſelf perhaps from much guilt; for ſhe confeſſed, that, although ſhe had conſented to the marriage, ſhe had found her heart and ſoul indiſſolubly attached to Edmund. She conjured him to cheriſh her child; and, above all things, to give her ſuch an education, however humble, as may beſt ſecure her from following the fatal example of her unhappy mother. You will readily conceive with what tenderneſs our gentle Edmund replied to theſe heart-piercing entreaties. He aſſured the tender expiring parent, that I ſhould prove a moſt attentive and affectionate mother to the dear orphan Fanny (the name of their daughter). At this idea, he ſays, her bodily anguiſh ſeemed quite ſuſpended, and ſhe anſwered him in a tender tranſport: "Oh, my dear Edmund, I can believe any goodneſs in thoſe who are related to you! If your ſiſter, though I have not deſerved ſuch an honour, would but comfort my parting ſpirit with ſuch a promiſe from her own lips, my death would be a bleſſed one indeed!" It was in conſequence of this ſpeech that Edmund ſent immediately for me; but, alas! as I have already told you, I came too late; the little remaining ſtrength of the fond ſufferer was exhauſted by her impaſſioned diſcourſe with Edmund; and, after conjuring him moſt tenderly and repeatedly to her laſt gaſp to love the poor little Fanny, and to think more of Heaven,

ven, ſhe expired in his arms, about half an hour before my arrival.

The good old woman, with whom this unhappy girl had long reſided, is too far advanced into ſecond childhood to feel this horrible event with very poignant anguiſh. But on our dear feeling Edmund it has made the deepeſt impreſſion. It was with the outmoſt difficulty that I could perſuade him to quit the apartment of the deceaſed; and when I had drawn him from it I could not prevent his returning, to gaze with inſatiated grief on that lifeleſs frame which he had idolized, though not with a happy, yet with a vehement, affection. At my intreaty, however, he at length forced himſelf from the houſe, though not before the dawn of a new day; and it was between five and ſix yeſterday morning before we reached our own door. Since that time I have been greatly refreſhed by much comfortable ſleep; a bleſſing which our dear afflicted Edmund has not enjoyed: his mind, however, is as calm as I could expect it to be; his health, I truſt, not materially injured; though his nerves are at preſent in a painful agitation. At one time he talks of flying immediately to the ſchool of his poor little Fanny, and of bringing the child home directly: at another, he thinks himſelf not able to ſupport the ſight of her at preſent; and I think he ſeems moſt diſpoſed to follow the ſuggeſtion of your kind letter, which arrived the day before this dreadful event, and to join his friend Seymour abroad, leaving me to take care of his little Fanny, which you will readily believe I have promiſed to do to the utmoſt of my ability,

ability, and with all the tenderneſs of a real mother. This plan I think very much to be preferred to all I can think of, for various reaſons, with which I will not continue to lengthen this immoderately long letter. If you think with me, my good Audley, pray write a few ſoothing lines to our dear Edmund, and exhort him to the excurſion you have already ſuggeſted. I am miſerably wearied by writing ſo long and ſo eagerly; and can only add, GOD bleſs you! Pray let us hear from you by the returning poſt; and believe me ever

Your affectionate

LUCY.

P. S. Pray tell Harriot, with my love, that the more I ſee and hear of life, the more I admire, not only your virtues, but your rare felicity. May Heaven long preſerve it! Adieu. I need not remind you, that it is the peculiar duty of the happy to comfort the afflicted.

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER.

MY VERY DEAR EDMUND,

I WAS juſt folding up the incloſed letter, which I had written to your friend Seymour, in the hope of its travelling to him in your portmanteau, when I was ſurpriſed and ſhocked by the melancholy account of your recent diſtreſs. Believe me, we ſympathiſe moſt cordially in your ſorrow. Whatever failings may have belonged to the dear unhappy girl you have loſt, they are out-weighed in our imagination by the force and fidelity of her affection to you; and I muſt aſſure you, both in Harriot's name and my own, that you may ſend your intereſting little Fanny at any time to us, and depend on our treating her exactly as a child of our own. If you approve our ſyſtem of domeſtic education and if Lucy will reſign to us a charge ſo precious, we ſhall be happy to enlarge our infantine circle by ſuch an acquiſition.

As to yourſelf, my dear brother, I can perfectly enter into all the various trouble of heart and mind in which you have been ſo ſuddenly involved. To behold the calamitous deſtruction of

of a lovely being, by whom you knew yourſelf beloved, though "Not wiſely, yet too well," muſt make an impreſſion on your feeling ſpirit too forcible to be counteracted by any vain condoleance or conſolation. The very failings of the dear departed muſt have a tendency to encreaſe the fond vehemence of recent grief. It is ſurely natural for you to think with the more tenderneſs of her affection, from reflecting on the ſevere price ſhe paid for its indulgence. Alas, how full of bitterneſs is the ordinary lot of women! Your poor Sylvia, never happy even with you, would have been a wretch indeed in that ſtate from which the mercy of Providence has ſnatched her. The religious point of view in which the fond dying girl beheld her own deſtiny, has endeared her memory to me; and the child ſhe has ſo anxiouſly recommended to your care will be an invaluable bequeſt, if ſhe ſerves, as I truſt ſhe will, to retrace and perpetuate on your heart the affectionate leſſon of piety bequeathed to you by the lips of her expiring mother.

Overwhelmed as you muſt have been, my dear Edmund, by this heart-piercing ſcene, I ſtill hope that you will ſoon be able to recover the natural tranquillity of your cultivated mind, and that you will ſpeedily purſue the project of foreign excurſion. Nothing can be more medicinal to the anguiſh of afflicted love than to force yourſelf with a generous ardour, into the immediate ſervice of friendſhip. Indeed, little force will be neceſſary on this occaſion, as I am perſuaded that no ſelfiſh ſorrow can diminiſh your anxiety for the perils of a friend ſo juſtly dear to you as Seymour. You will perceive,

by

by the incloſed, that I am greatly alarmed for him myſelf: no youth, indeed, can more truly want a Mentor in his travels, than this accompliſhed, but haſty young man; eſpecially ſince his natural impetuoſity is inflamed and exaſperated, by a diſappointment which his high paſſions are ſo little able to brook. If any thing can ſave him from plunging into ſuch licentious diſſipation as will complete his miſery, it muſt be the vigilance of your friendſhip. Heaven grant that you may be the means of preſerving each other from all evil, under the auſpices of your angelic Giuliana! With what delight would your friends of this country ſee you both reſtored to it, with a new caſt of mind, and diſciplined by affliction into a perfect ſenſe of religion! I flatter myſelf this is no improbable event; and I well know it is an event which would make ſome tender hearts under this roof leap for joy. Among them, believe me, the heart of

Your affectionate brother.

P. S. Pray tell Lucy, who is ever you know a moſt welcome gueſt at this houſe, that we conjure her not to remain in ſolitude; but as ſoon as you depart, to fly to us, with her new little charge, whom I muſt again aſſure you, my dear Edmund, we are all eager to embrace. I need not tell you what kind and devout wiſhes are formed by the females around me for the proſperity of your voyage.

LETTER

LETTER XX.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO SEYMOUR.

My dear haſty young friend,

ON my return from a diſtant and melancholy expedition, I was aſtoniſhed and grieved to hear that you have driven yourſelf to the Continent, inſtead of returning, as I hoped you would a contented and welcome gueſt to this houſe. I do not, my dear Seymour, write with an angry pen, to upbraid you for what is paſt; nor to remind you of the hopes you gave me, that you were reſolved to purſue a very different line of conduct. I know how apt we all are to forget our rational reſolutions; and one of our old claſſical acquaintance has particularly taught me, not to require reaſon and method from the madneſs of love. On your late meaſures I will trouble you with no remarks! but allow me to caſt a friendly eye to the future. Some meditations on human nature have induced me to think that of all traitors an ardent affection like yours, my engaging raſh friend, is the greateſt and moſt perilous traitor to itſelf: on being thwarted in a point which it too vehemently purſues, it is apt to draw concluſions unwarranted by truth, and directly

directly oppoſite to its own intereſt. Dive into your own boſom for an illuſtration of my remark and tell me ingenuouſly, if you have not frequently concluded that Cornelia has no real love for you, becauſe ſhe did not comply with your late importunate and too cruel requeſt. The chief purpoſe of my letter is, to preſerve you from a natural ſelf-deception in this very important article. Believe me, I ſpeak the language of ſtrict truth, and of ſteady, though offended friendſhip, when I aſſure you, that the female heart never felt affection more genuine and intenſe than the affection which the deſolate Cornelia ſtill retains for you. Though her reaſon and religion enjoined and enabled her to decide againſt you, in your late conteſt; yet the agonies of heart which that angelic victory coſt her threw her life into great danger. The conſciouſneſs of having acted in a manner to merit the approbation of heaven and earth, has proved the moſt effectual medicine in reſtoring her to that degree of tranquillity and half-recovered health, which ſhe poſſeſſes at preſent. The love, which has ceaſed to convulſe her heart, ſtill exiſts undiminiſhed in her boſom, and is become, indeed, ſo much a part of her exiſtence, that whatever your deſtiny may be, ſhe, I am convinced, will never attach herſelf to any other man. The heart of Cornelia was formed to love only once: you have been, and ever muſt be, the only object of its tender idolatry; and your generous ſpirit ought to admire and applaud the divine fortitude with which ſhe endures to ſacrifice even this idol to her GOD.—But, alas! my dear Seymour, it has been your misfortune, as it is the misfortune of thouſands at your age,

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and in your rank of life, to look on piety either with contempt or compaſſion: as it has proved an inpediment to your deſires, you will be tempted to conſider it with peculiar ſpleen and injuſtice. There are times, I dare ſay, when the piety of your accompliſhed and beloved Cornelia appears to you a moſt degrading infirmity; the mark of a poor, a timid, and feeble mind, though in truth it is exactly the reverſe. Believe me, her piety is of that genuine kind which elevates the underſtanding and ennobles the heart. By uniting with the tendereſt and moſt powerful of all natural ſentiments, I mean, her maternal affection, it gives a tranſcendant charm to her character; and makes her at once, perhaps, the moſt intereſting and moſt perfect of human creatures; with all the ſoftneſs of woman, and all the energy of a ſaint. I wiſh, my dear friend, that I had the power of conveying to you, in the moſt vivid colours of eloquence, a complete idea of all her merit, all her lovelineſs, all her affection; not to exaſperate your regret for a treaſure you have loſt, but to awaken you to an early juſt ſenſe of what it is ſtill very poſſible for you to acquire. However angry and unjuſt towards her you may feel at preſent, a day will ſurely come (and it is the wiſh of my heart to accelerate that day), when the conduct of Cornelia will appear to you as lovely as her perſon: it is impoſſible that a ſpirit like yours (however mortified and offended) can meditate on ſuch a woman with long and unrelenting injuſtice; for had not education, indulgence, and faſhion, given a fatal bias to your mind, believe me, it would have been in all points the counterpart of Cornelia's. I never beheld

beheld a couple in my life whom nature ſeemed to have faſhioned more happily for each other, or whom time and chance had united in a more ardent affection. You have both the ſame exquiſite ſenſibility, the ſame openneſs of heart, the ſame generous abhorrence, not only of every thing that is mean, but of every thing that borders upon meanneſs. In ſhort, whenever I think of you, and that is not ſeldom, you ſtrike me as the firſt pair in the beautiful deſcription of Milton. How happy ſhould I think myſelf in ſeeing your nuptial couch prepared under the auſpices of heaven! I am perſuaded, my dear Seymour, that time and experience will ſoon ſhew you the emptineſs and inſtability of all enjoyments, which do not reſt on the baſis of Religion. If Providence, uniting with your own excellent underſtanding, ſhould ſpeedily produce that happy change in your religious ſentiments which I am ſo eager to behold, pray let this letter ſerve to remind you, that you will certainly find, under my cuſtody, perhaps the moſt valuable earthly reward which GOD can beſtow upon any man for correcting the errors of his mind, a woman of exquiſite attractions, and as full of purity and love as the religion ſhe profeſſes. Let me add, that when I ſee you entitled to this reward, it will be conſigned to you by a perſon whoſe joy on the occaſion will almoſt equal your own. Farewell and believe me

Your very faithful and

affectionate friend,

CHARLES AUDLEY.

LETTER

LETTER XXI.

FROM EDMUND TO CHARLES AUDLEY.

YOU are the beſt of brothers, and the moſt indulgent of friends! How can I ſufficiently love and thank you, both on Seymour's account and my own? Alas! I am ill able to expreſs, at preſent, the double gratitude that I feel. Yet I muſt thank you for your moſt affectionate and ſoothing letter, from the bottom of a heart very deeply, and, I confeſs, very fooliſhly afflicted. Ah, my dear Charles, I begin to conceive how much the balm which Religion adminiſters to a wounded ſpirit, may be ſuperior to all the boaſted conſolations of philoſophy. I vainly thought that I had diſciplined my own quiet and contemplative mind in ſuch a manner as to render it ſuperior to the malice of accident; yet the event of a minute has thrown me into a diſorder of heart and ſpirit that I might bluſh to confeſs to any perſon leſs indulgent or leſs dear to me than you are. Good Heaven! of what little uſe and efficacy is the mere unaſſiſted reaſon of a creature, who vainly prides himſelf on his rationality! My reaſon has told me a thouſand times, that it is fooliſh to lament the death of an unhappy girl, who frequently ſeem-

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ed to live only to torment me; yet, I own to you, her loſs has affected me ſo much, that in loſing this lovely tormentor I feel as if I had loſt every thing which could reconcile me to life.—She was, indeed, a very extraordinary and enchanting creature. To atone for a temper, perhaps the moſt capricious and ſelf-tormenting that ever exiſted, ſhe had the ſtrongeſt natural underſtanding, and the moſt pointed wit, that I ever met with in woman: a pretty and a ſpeaking countenance; a delicate body, ſtill more eloquent; and affections, whoſe ardor was equalled by their fidelity. Oh, my poor Sylvia! among all the infinite varieties of character which the ſex comprizes,

"I ne'er ſhall look upon thy like again."

But I deſerved to loſe thee as I did, for being ſo cold-hearted a wretch as to think of placing thee for life in the arms of that hapleſs ſimple fellow, who had not faculties to comprehend thy moſt engaging attractions, nor ſenſe to pity and correct thy ſelf-tormenting infirmities! Oh my dear Charles, if there is (as you ſo confidently and ſo chearfully expect) a happier world to come after this, ſurely ſhe will not be excluded from its beatitude, who never diſcovered, even to the eyes of a prejudiced inquiſitor, any failing that did not ariſe, either from a neglected education, or from organs too delicately conſtructed. But I will endeavour to turn my thoughts from the dear loſt object of my very turbulent and fatal love, to that poor little orphan whom ſhe has enjoined me to cheriſh with unblameable affection; the very tender and generous manner in which you ſpeak to

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me of this dear deſolate child, and the fond intereſt which our incomparable ſiſter takes in its preſervation, have proved the moſt ſoothing and beneficial medicine to my dejected ſpirit. You will not doubt the warmth of my gratitude to you both on ths occaſion, when you recollect how ſeriouſly I have ever thought of parental duties. If a tender vigilance is due from every father to his child, how doubly incumbent is this duty upon thoſe who have raſhly introduced their offspring into a world of trouble, under ſuch a diſadvantage as no heart, that is truly parental, can think of, without the tremors of apprehenſion, if not of ſorrow! Heaven grant that my ſweet little Fanny, who is indeed a very promiſing child, may live to reward you, by her improvement, for the extreme kindneſs with which you ſpeak of her education! I conſign her with gratitude and confidence to my too equally dear and excellent ſiſters. Lucy ſhall bring her to your houſe as ſoon as I am gone; but I cannot quit the kingdom without folding the dear little orphan once to my heart, though I am well aware that the anguiſh of that moment will equal its delight. Her ſchool lies in my way, and Lucy will attend me ſo far. I am eager to be gone on every account, and particularly becauſe I have received ſome very alarming intelligence from our raſh and ungovernable friend.——You will grieve to hear, that his haſty ſpirit has driven him into the ſnares of a Venetian courtezan, who lives with an old voluptuary of Portugal. He is ſo captivated by this young ſorcereſs, that perhaps his next letter may be too full of licentious rapture for a female eye to peruſe. At all events,

you

you will join with me in thinking that it is much better for us to keep our women in abſolute ignorance of this perilous folly. I have therefore taken precautions, that all his letters to me which may arrive in my abſence ſhall be ſecretly delivered into your hand.——The friendly ſolicitude you expreſs for him entitles you to their peruſal; and, however unguarded they may be, I can ſecurely truſt them to your virtue and diſcretion. Ah, my dear happy Charles, had your brother and your friend been your equals in theſe invaluable qualities, their lives would have been leſs imbittered than they have been, and I ſhould moſt probably have eſcaped the double load which now preſſes on the ſpirits of

Your dejected, but moſt

grateful and affectionate,

EDMUND.

LETTER XXII.

FROM EDMUND TO MRS. AUDLEY.

IF I have been, my dear ſiſter, as you have frequently told me, the great ſupport and comfort of your life, in a ſeaſon when the powers of your own heart and mind deſerted you, how amply have you now repaid the affectionate obligation! I have no words half expreſſive enough to tell you my grateful ſenſe of the intelligent tenderneſs with which you treated my poor little ſenſitive Fanny and her diſtracted father in our painful interview, and more painful ſeparation. My beſt mode of thanking you will be to confeſs very frankly that without your aſſiſtance I ſhould have been utterly overwhelmed, and unable to purſue the expedition to which ſo many powerful motives have conſpired to invite me. Our dear inconſiderate Seymour little thinks that I am haſtening to his ſuccour; and much leſs could he imagine what pangs of heart it has coſt me to force myſelf into his ſervice, eager and ſolicitous as I ever am to ſerve him. But while I held my dear little weeping orphan in my arms, I felt as if all my life ought to be devoted ſolely to her; and in the moment when I tore myſelf at laſt from her ſweet

ſweet little infantine embrace, my poor Sylvia, ſeemed to die a ſecond time. Ah! my dear Lucy, as I drove away from you both, I felt ſuch bitter anguiſh and drearineſs of ſoul as no language can expreſs. It was not till the next day in my power to recover my reaſon enough to think of you as I ought, and to enjoy the reflection that I had left my child happily diſpoſed to obey and love you, and ſecure of finding in your tenderneſs all the fond vigilance of a real mother. Heaven bleſs you both! and Heaven grant that the ſervices which I am trying to render our raſh friend in Italy may be as great as the pains I have endured in ſetting out on the adventure!

I have been ſo engroſſed by theſe ſufferings, that I have not yet told you I am now on French ground. I had a quick paſſage acroſs the Channel, and without any ſickneſs except that of the heart. As I traverſed the deck of our veſſel, I continually thought of our dear angelic Giuliana and her ſimilar ſufferings in this very paſſage. Alas, my dear Lucy, I call our ſufferings ſimilar; but to you I will confeſs, and with ſhame confeſs, their difference. In ſearching my own dreary heart, I find no portion of that divine reſignation and enthuſiaſm with which our adored Giuliana ſupported her ſorrow, and converted into a bleſſing the very bitterneſs of affliction. Oh! Philoſophy, I begin to abhor thee as the moſt treacherous of guides. Thou art magnificent in thy promiſes, but contemptible in thy performance. In the twilight of ordinary unafflicted life, thou only ſerveſt to drown by thy loud-talking our ſalutary apprehenſions; but, when the darkneſs of real tribulation falls upon us, our loquacious

leader becomes a mere mute, and all the impreſſion which thy voice has left upon the heart is regret and ſhame for having truſted it ſo long. Oh! Lucy, if it ſhall be my lot to ſee you and the dear orphan no more, pray remember it is the requeſt of my heart, that you will infuſe into the very promiſing mind of your precious little ward an early ſerious ſenſe of Religion. Do not, my dear ſiſter, let your tenderneſs take any alarm at a ſuggeſtion ſo little expected from me. Do not, I conjure you, ſuppoſe that I have any gloomy preſage of haſtening to the grave. On the contrary, I can aſſure you, my health is already mended by my travels; and I begin to be animated by the hope of accompliſhing the devout wiſh of our dear Charles, and of bringing back an unexceptionable huſband to the moſt intereſting of enamoured woman, our matchleſs Cornelia. Perhaps, in labouring to preſerve the unballaſted ſpirit of my precipitate friend, I may ſave my own alſo from a wreck that I did not apprehend. Happy indeed ſhall we be, if, after all our various difficulties and diſtreſs of mind, we at laſt form all together a little firmly ſettled ſociety, united not only by human but cœleſtial ties. With this animating idea I will bid you farewell, dear and excellent guardian of my little treaſure. Give our ſweet Fanny a parental kiſs for me; and aſſure her, that I ſhall return with my pockets better filled with pretty toys for her, than ſhe ever found them in her life. I hope this will find you both comfortably lodged in the chearful houſe of our dear Charles. Pray do not fail to tell me very frankly what kind of firſt impreſſion our little Fanny makes on every

creature

creature at Audley-Grove. I have no doubts of her meeting with great kindneſs; but I have an anxious and ambitious deſire to know whether the ſweet little Fairy, in the moment of her firſt becoming viſible to our friends, appears as lovely to them as ſhe does, my dear Lucy, in your eyes, and in thoſe of

Your moſt grateful and affectionate

EDMUND.

LETTER XXIII.

FROM CORNELIA TO MISS AUDLEY.

SURELY no human creature was ever ſo deeply indebted to all the various branches of one family, as I am, my dear Lucy, to yours. It is not enough that your relations of this houſe have watched over my poor feeble frame, and more ſhattered ſpirits, with inceſſant unwearied tenderneſs and parental anxiety; even your dear ſedate Edmund is to quit for me, I find,

that quiet and comfortable home, to which he is ſo much wedded, and to wander for my ſake over ſeas and mountains to Genoa. I might indeed play the ungrateful prude, and pretend that I have no concern in his travels; but the ſpirit of your Cornelia, my dear Lucy, was never formed for any unworthy ſubterfuge, any vain or ungenerous diſguiſe. No, my dear, I entreat you to tell your friendly Edmund, that my heart will for ever call itſelf his debtor. Whoever attempts to ſerve our dear precipitate miſguided Seymour will aſſuredly render a ſervice to me that I ſhall ever be moſt willing to acknowledge. I will freely confeſs to you, my ſweet friend, that I feel the idea of Edmund's journey as the firſt ray of chearful light that has glanced on my benighted ſpirits ſince I ſunk into the wretched ſtate of debility and dejection, from which my incomparable friends have been labouring to reſtore me. It is not my dear Lucy, that I fondly catch at a falſe and frivolous hope of making the beloved fugitive my huſband. No, believe me, that Heaven which gave me ſtrength to reject the moſt inſinuating, the moſt dangerous, the moſt idolized of all mortal tempters, ſtill prevents my ſinking into a weak apoſtacy, from which I have ſo fervently prayed to be preſerved. In this point I have ſome reaſon to be ſatisfied with myſelf; and whenever I caſt my eyes on my children, thoſe precious ſources and rewards of my reſolution, I feel an inexpreſſible maternal triumph in my ſoul, which I am convinced no temptations in the world could ever induce me to forfeit. Yet, ſupported as I am by a proper ſenſe of my own conduct, and flattered as I am by

our

our dear friends of this houſe on my fortitude (alas! they know not how weak a wretch they flatter); I am diſtracted with the dread of a thouſand evils into which I may have driven the loſt Seymour. Oh God! how bitter is the condition of my own ſafety, ſince I could obtain it only by the hazard of proving a ſource of wretchedneſs to the man whom I have ſo many reaſons to love! Ah! my dear Lucy, you, who know as well as I do his fiery and precipitate ſpirit, will pity the agonizing terrors which it inceſſantly awakens in my heart. How often do we hear of impetuous men, who ruſh into a deſperate and ſudden marriage from motives of reſentment and indignation. Oh, Heavens! my dear Lucy, I could not hear that Seymour was married thus and ſurvive it. Merciful God! preſerve me from a blow that would irritate my poor ſhattered brain into madneſs! Yet why ſhould I feel it thus? Oh, Lucy! are theſe ſentiments that become the firm votary of Reaſon and Religion? No, my conſcience tells me they are not; yet I feel they are ſo interwoven with the fibres of my heart, that I know not how to tear them from my breaſt. O Jealouſy! thou keeneſt of tortures, I did not think it was poſſible for thee to exiſt when Hope was utterly extinguiſhed; but I feel that thy ſtings can pierce even the cold armour of Deſpair, and againſt them there is no defence but the dark ſhield of Death. O, Lucy! I have thrown my poor trembling nerves into ſuch diſorder by the phantoms which my own troubled fancy has conjured up, that I muſt throw down my pen, and reſume it at

ſome ſeaſon of more tranquillity; if ſuch a ſeaſon never arrives, this paper ſhall never reach you.

The preceding pages have waited long, my dear Lucy, for this poſtſcript; but in the interval, how deeply has my heart been affected with ſorrow, with pity, and with gratitude, in hearing all that I have heard of your amiable afflicted brother!—Poor Edmund! has he too experienced the turbulent anguiſh of an unwiſe and fatal affection? and, overwhelmed as he muſt be with recent grief, has he ſtill the generoſity to ſurmount his own immediate diſtreſs, and proceed directly to aſſume the guidance and protection of our raſh rambling Seymour?

" Reward Him for the noble deed, juſt Heaven!
" For this one action, guard Him, and diſtinguiſh
" Him
" With ſignal mercies, and with great deliverance!
" Let him know nothing elſe but good on earth.
" And everlaſting bleſſedneſs hereafter."

Heaven indeed has almoſt granted half this prayer, in giving him, my dear Lucy, ſuch a comforter as you are, and ſuch a bleſſed guardian for his poor little deſerted Fanny. But haſte, I conjure you, and bring this dear intereſting orphan to us. I long to take the little hapleſs innocent to my boſom, and cheriſh her as my own daughter. I perceive already that ſhe will prove to me a ſweet and ſoothing companion; for my full heart will ſeem at leaſt to relieve itſelf, while I am careſſing the child, from that burthen of unutterable

unutterable gratitude which I feel towards her father. Haſte, therefore, my dear friend, I again conjure you, to a houſe where every heart is eager to bid you welcome, and none more ſo than the poor bruiſed and troubled, but ſtill warm and feeling, heart of

Your moſt affectionate

CORNELIA.

LETTER XXIV

FROM MISS AUDLEY TO HER BROTHER EDMUND.

MY VERY DEAR AND GENEROUS TRAVELLER.

IT is with no little portion of pride and delight that I thank you for all the kind things you ſay of me in your affecting letter. In return, I ſhall give you ſo ſpeedy an account of the dear little Fairy Queen (whom I have the pleaſure to

attend more as a worſhiper than a governeſs), that I am perſuaded my letter will reach Genoa long before you can. I figure to myſelf the great joy you will have in peruſing, under the roof of the dear ſympathetic Giuliana, the pleaſing hiſtory I have to give of my delightful little companion. I love your parental anxiety, in aſking me to deſcribe the firſt impreſſion ſhe made on the friendly circle here. But, my dear Edmund, when you made this requeſt, you ſhould have inſpired me with powers of deſcription far ſurpaſſing the humble ones I poſſeſs; for the ſcene you wiſh to have repreſented to you requires a very maſterly hand.

O that I were a Shakſpeare in petticoats for your ſake! I would then preſent you with ſuch a fairy drama as would draw ſome tears of tenderneſs and delight from your parental eyes. But as it is, I muſt content myſelf with aſking you a ſimple queſtion: Did you ever obſerve the female faces in the gallery of a playhouſe when extraordinary talents were diſplayed by ſome Liliputian prince or princeſs? If you have, you have ſeen thoſe ſpeaking faces expreſs a tender admiration, and ſomething like a doubt whether the infantine performer could be an infant or not. And, having ſeen ſuch faces, you may have, in recollecting them, a very good idea of the firſt impreſſion made by our dear little Fanny in this friendly theatre, where all her infantine graces are admired, and all her early talents called forth. You know we are fond of children; and believe me, no child can have a more bewitching manner of conciliating affection. Harriot thinks her extremely like you; and every time ſhe ſays ſo, Cornelia is ready to

preſs

preſs this living miniture of you to her boſom, in a tranſport of gratitude for thoſe ſervices which we truſt you are now rendering to our whole party by the important object of your excurſion. How happy will your letters make us all, if you are able to ſend us accounts as good as I have now the pleaſure of diſpatching to you! I have not only the great ſatisfaction of aſſuring you, that your child is idolized and made happy here; but I am able to add, that ſhe is an abſolute cordial, and a very ſalutary and delightful one, to the tender ſpirits of Cornelia; they have taken a prodigious fancy to each other; ſo much ſo, that I ſhould be quite jealous if I did not conſider Cornelia as a kind of ſecond ſelf.

Apropos of Jealouſy: we have had a moſt ludicrous little example of that tragical paſſion, and a proof how very early it begins to agitate and diſtreſs the poor female heart. My ſweet little niece and nameſake, whom Cornelia wiſhes to ſee in future days united to her eldeſt ſon, and who is already ſtyled his little wife, has begun, young as ſhe is, to weep for the inconſtancy of her William. The Liliputian traitor was ſo enchanted by the more womanly attractions of our blooming Fanny, that he grievouſly deſerted his more infantine *cara ſpoſa*. The points and freaks of jealouſy at three years old appeared very laughable to Harriot and me; but Cornelia, who has, I believe, much more genuine tenderneſs than either of us, ſays we are abſolute Barbarians, and ſhe could not reſt herſelf till ſhe had made the tiny tormented heart quite eaſy. This ſhe very dexterouſly accompliſhed; and diverted us not a little, by her mode of managing

naging the affections of our Fairy groupe, in which ſhe profeſſed herſelf much aſſiſted by the intelligence and good-nature of Fanny, who has, with great ſweetneſs of diſpoſition, accepted the younger Sedley as her ſwain. To all theſe matters I alluded, when I told you, that, had I the talents of Shakeſpeare, I could ſend you a very intereſting Fairy-drama. Believe me, the quarrel and reconcilement of Titania and Oberon are not more highly dramatic than the ſcenes that have paſſed between our little Lucy and William.

Had I not ſeen ſo much of your parental tenderneſs, I ſhould be afraid of your thinking me a ſad old goſſiping nurſe, for having talked ſo long of our little folks. They have indeed engroſſed ſo much of my paper, that I can only add a few words of our grown gentry.

Theſe, however, ſhall be ſerious words. And firſt let me ſay, that our dear Charles dropt a tear of paternal joy over one paſſage of your very affecting letter to me: I need not tell you which paſſage, nor with what cordial ſatisfaction he ſpeaks of that happy revolution which he ſays is now working in your mind; and which Cornelia ſometimes, I believe, conſiders as a bleſſed harbinger of a ſimilar revolution in the mind of a certain perſon ſtill dearer to her than you are.——Pray tell our beloved Giuliana, that if ſhe wiſhes to make a little paradiſe on earth for her Engliſh friends, ſhe has only to lead in perſon the two converted wanderers to this door, that will

"almoſt leap from off its hinges
To give you entrance here."—

Heaven

Heaven grant that me may ſee a day of ſuch univerſal happineſs! Such is the conſtant prayer of our domeſtic circle; and particularly my dear Edmund, of

Your affectionate ſiſter.

P. S. Fanny charges me to tell you how exactly ſhe has done every thing you deſired; and how dearly ſhe loves you. She is, in truth, a ſweet little model of obedience and affection.—Adieu.

LETTER XXV.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

AT length, my dear and too long diſregarded prophet, the miſchiefs you have frequently foreboded are fallen on me. I am paying, at this moment, a heavy penalty for having laughed ſo often at your prudent timidity in the purſuit

ſuit of pleaſure. While you, without a rival in your rural love, and unſuſpected by the graver part of the world, are quietly enjoying the tenderneſs, and even the whimſies, of your conſtant though capricious Sylvia; I am thrown, by my impetuous folly, on a couch of pain, penitence, and diſhonour. A ſad example, I confeſs, my dear cautious Edmund, of the maxim from our favourite poet, which you have ſo vainly endeavoured to fix as an amulet on my haſty ſpirit.

"That violent delights have violent ends."

But you will rejoice that I am ſtill living, when I tell you it has appeared a matter of great doubt whether my half departed life would return to me or not. You would not eaſily gueſs the perſon to whom I am indebted for its immediate preſervation. I muſt haſten therefore to tell you, that I owe it entirely to the humanity, the nobleneſs of nature, and, I may add, the medical ſkill, of the very Don Manuel whoſe private rights I had ſo groſsly invaded. Ah, Edmund, if I ſhould live, I have learnt at leaſt one leſſon, and that is, never to believe what rumour ſays to the prejudice of perſons who are diſtinguiſhed by extraordinary talents. Men of genius are too much inclined, perhaps to deſpiſe the world; but the world takes ample revenge, by giving them quick credit for a thouſand unexiſting enormities.

I had fooliſhly believed that my noble Seignor of Portugal was an old voluptuous brute and tyrannical Barbarian. I have found him exactly the reverſe. He is indeed, as report ſaid of

of him, a prodigy of univerſal knowledge; but he is equally admirable for candour, indulgence, and generoſity. Violante is in truth no miſtreſs of his, but a wild and licentious, though lovely, daughter of Eve, whom the kind Seignor, with more zeal than prudence, undertook to diſcipline and reform for a young noble friend, who loves her to ſuch a pitch of diſtraction that he has ſerious thoughts of making her his wife. Nor would any one find reaſon to cenſure his idea, if ſuperlative beauty and talents could atone for the want of chaſtity in a married woman. Though the charms and allurements of this Syren have nearly put a ſorry end to my life, I cannot even now ſpeak of them without praiſe. But you will grow impatient for my own particular hiſtory. Let me pauſe a little, my dear Edmund, and you ſhall have it. I am ſo feeble, and ſo conſtrained in my poſture, that I can only write a few lines at a time. But, after a little reſt, I will begin my diſaſtrous adventures, and proceed as far as pain and langor will give me leave.

During my ſecond viſit to Violante we were alarmed in the middle of the night, or rather towards morning. The fair agile Venetian ſprang haſtily from her pillow; and, having liſtened a few moments on the outſide of her chamber-door, ſhe flew rapidly within, and turned the key. "The old Seignor is certainly returned," cried the terrified Violante—"the ſecretary has watched and betrayed us—if the old tyrant catches you here, my love, he will

will take perhaps both our lives—I am certainly ruined for ever if you cannot contrive to eſcape from this window—I think you may—for Heaven's ſake, try if it is poſſible!" Such were the ſuggeſtions of my poor frighted companion, while ſhe ran backwards and forwards to a window in a little adjoining dreſſing-room, cloſe to which grew a tall poplar, ſo very near the window that I could eaſily touch the leaves with my hand; but there was not any ſtrong branch within the utmoſt reach of my extended arm.

There was however a ſhort and ſlight pole laid acroſs from the window to the tree, which ſerved as a paſſage to a favourite tame ſquirrel of Violante's, which lived alternately in her room and in the tree. My only chance was to ſpring lightly over this pole, and ſeize the large limb of the poplar on which it reſted. As I have ever been, you know, a little vain of my agility, I thought I could ſafely accompliſh this hazardous ſtep; and I was induced to attempt it by the agony of terror which was viſible in every look and geſture of Violante, and by her extreme anxiety to preſerve her reputation. After giving her a very haſty kiſs, and receiving from her all the little aid ſhe could afford me, I ſet my foot on the fatal pole, and, not being a ſquirrel, made it crack beneath me. I had juſt time enough to throw myſelf forward, and catch hold of ſome quivering boughs, which ſerved, they tell me, in ſome degree, to break my fall, and ſaved me from inſtant death, though not from utter ſtupefaction.

How

How irreſiſtible are the ſudden emotions of humanity! Anxious as Violante was to ſave her own credit by removing her luckleſs paramour with the peril of his bones, ſhe could not refrain from a loud ſhriek in beholding my fall: and that piercing ſhriek, which rung in my ears as I fell, is the laſt thing I can recollect till, after a ſuſpenſion of ſenſe and life, which continued, they tell me during ſeveral hours, I awaked to the full perception of pain and infirmity, in a lower apartment of the houſe.

Judge, my dear Edmund, of my equal aſtoniſhment and anguiſh, when, in firſt opening my eyes, I beheld the ſtriking countenance of Don Manuel, who was employed at that moment in chafing my temples with all the kind anxiety of a medical friend! I fancy, a wounded conſcience gives peculiar quickneſs to the powers of recollection, for, in the inſtant that I perceived the kindneſs of my majeſtic attendant, I felt more anguiſh of mind than pain of body, though my whole frame was in a very horrible condition. My head, though much bruiſed, had eſcaped, by luckily pitching on ſoft ground in a marvellous manner, eſpecially as my body ſtruck obliquely againſt an antique altar of marble, which ſtood as an ornament to the garden, and, wounding me with its rough broken edge, ſhattered two of my ribs, and lacerated my breaſt. Whether it was owing to my extreme weakneſs, from the blood I had loſt, and the bruiſes I had ſuſtained, or whether I may impute it to the natural ſenſibility of my temper, I cannot tell; but I muſt confeſs to you, that at the ſight of Don Manuel I burſt into tears, and exclaimed, "Oh, Seignor, I

cannot

cannot endure this friendly attention from the man whom I have injured!" He anſwered me in Italian, with a mild dignity, "I entreat you, my young friend, to keep your ſpirits as calm as poſſible. I can aſſure you that you have not injured me, though you have, from an imprudence very natural at your age, engaged in a raſh and perilous adventure, which has nearly coſt you your life. I truſt, however, that we ſhall ſave you; and if your name is Seymour, as I have ſome little reaſon to ſuſpect it is, I ſhall have a particular delight in your preſervation. You will eaſily conceive, my dear Edmund, how my aſtoniſhment redoubled when I found myſelf not only known, but endeared by being known, to my generous preſerver. Don Manuel, it ſeems, is a very old friend of Giuliana's father, and has frequently been their gueſt at Genoa. In a late viſit to them he heard the hiſtory of my reſtoring that angelic wanderer to the parental arms of Pinelli; and, as Manuel is himſelf a ſingular enthuſiaſt, he conceived a great prejudice in my favour, and a vehement deſire, as he tells me, that chance might introduce me to his perſonal acquaintance. It has now indeed accompliſhed his deſire, and in a manner which ſhews me very forcibly how Providence ſeems to pleaſe itſelf in rewarding an action of diſintereſted benevolence. I little thought that the ſlight ſervices which I rendered to Giuliana would ever procure me ſuch an aſſiſtant in an hour of calamity.

As

As ſoon as I found that I poſſeſſed ſome unexpected influence on the generous ſpirit of the old Seignor, I began to exert it in behalf of the too attractive Violante. Upon my making ſome anxious enquiries and interceding for this lovely delinquent, her noble guardian imparted to me the private anecdote which I have mentioned in the opening of this long epiſtle, or rather ſeries of epiſtles. He acquainted me alſo with his reſolution of ſending her home to her native city with a handſome proviſion for her life, and his hope of perſuading his young enamoured friend to relinquiſh the prepoſterous idea of marrying a beauty whom the moſt ſplendid proſpect of ambition could not reclaim from the moſt provoking incontinence. Poor Violante indeed is as frail and falſe as ſhe is fair. The vehement quarrel between her and the old Seignor, which proved ſuch a ſnare to me, aroſe from a very warm expoſtulation which her noble guardian thought it his duty to utter againſt a tendency which the lady had diſcovered to connect herſelf with a young Frenchman of faſhion, whom the cautious Don Manuel had ingeniouſly contrived to remove in good time from the reach of her attraction. Her quick paſſions, irritated by this diſappointment, had haſtily made me the hapleſs inſtrument of her revenge. But here I muſt again drop my pen, not only for eaſe of poſture, but to converſe a little with my admirable kind friend and phyſician Don Manuel.

This noble Portugueze is a very engaging character: but alas! my dear Edmund, how different

different is the anguiſh of the wounds under which I am now ſmarting from that which confined me at Sedley-hall! My ſufferings here are my ſhame; but there I had a delightful pride in every pang. Here is no tender Cornelia, to ſoothe and conſole me, to convert pain into tranſport, by that angelic ſenſibility and gratitude with which ſhe ſhewed me how deeply ſhe felt that honourable wound which I received in her ſervice. Ah! my ſweet Cornelia, perhaps I ſhall never ſee thy lovely compaſſionate countenance again. Yet, in my mind's eye I behold thee at this moment; yes, I behold thee, angelic as thou art, in all thy radient perfection. The miſt of pride and indignation that did thee ſuch cruel injuſtice is baniſhed from my mind. Oh, Edmund! what an ideot! But I muſt not indulge this fond emotion of returning tenderneſs, nor lay thus weeping, like a ſick girl, over my own infirmities. I will take a little chearing ſuſtenance, and then endeavour to chat with you my dear Edmund, a little longer, and, if I can, in a more manly ſtyle.

I am much revived by a little wine and water, and ſtill more by the bleſſed intelligence that I ſhall to-morrow ſee the long-wiſhed-for Giuliana. I have the additional comfort of being pleaſed with myſelf a little for having juſt paſſed with ſome firmneſs and ſpirit through a ſcene that I thought would affect me in my preſent weak condition much more than it did. Poor Violante, who is juſt ſetting forth on her return to Venice, requeſted

queſted to be indulged in a conference with me, for the ſake of being aſſured that I perfectly forgive her for all the ſevere ſufferings which her amorous indiſcretion has drawn upon me.——— Our interview was very friendly, though not very tender on either ſide. The half-penitent and half-affrighted girl looked upon me rather with a look of terror than of tenderneſs, as a man whoſe death might throw a grievous burthen on her ſoul. I, on my part, ſurveyed her with a fixt and ſerious concern, in reflecting on the ſad contraſt between the probable miſery of her life, and the rare accompliſhments that ſhe has received both from nature and from art.——— Though every ſpark of deſire was extinguiſhed, as you may well ſuppoſe, in my ſhattered frame, I could not behold her without a kind of fond pity and freſh admiration of her exquiſite beauty. Theſe emotions, however, ſeemed to be confined to my eyes, for my heart was hardened againſt her inſinuating voice by the remembrance of her unneceſſary lyes. Theſe were manifold: and as you know how much I deſpiſe a lyar in either ſex, you will not wonder that they had entirely annihilated my eſteem for this alluring fair. While ſhe ſlowly approached me, I could not help murmuring to myſelf, in the words of Shakſpeare,

" That we can call theſe delicate creatures ours,
" And not their appetites!"

When ſhe drew nearer, I diſcerned in her countenance ſuch ſigns of timidity and compunction as made me eager to relieve her from the dread which I ſaw ſhe entertained of my death.

She

She threw herſelf on her knees by the ſide of a little tent-bed in which they had placed me, and in great agitation implored my forgiveneſs. You will eaſily conceive that I ſaid every thing which I thought moſt likely to tranquillize her ſpirits; but you will not perhaps imagine that, in giving her my full pardon for all the deceit which ſhe frankly confeſſed, I gave her alſo much ſober advice.

Grieved as you will be for me, my dear Edmund, I think you will hardly forbear ſmiling at this picture of your impetuous friend, employed in preaching a ſermon upon truth and continence to a Venetian Courtezan.

I preached, I believe (though ſpeaking is very painful to me, as my lungs have been injured), with ſome energy of language, but I doubt with little effect: I mean, permanent effect on the future life of my fair auditor; for during my oration, which was often interrupted by my pain and difficulty of utterance, the poor trembling Violante profeſſed to regard me as a Heaven inſpired oracle of purity and peace. Indeed, Soloman himſelf was never in a condition to deſcant more feelingly on the vanity of voluptuouſneſs. I ſpoke, however, not ſo much from the impreſſion of preſent pain as from my long-ſettled ſentiments; for aſſuredly no man was ever formed with a heart and mind leſs diſpoſed to play the libertine, no man has a more perfect eſteem for the chaſte pleaſures of genuine love, than I have ever felt, though it has not been my lot to obtain them; and now perhaps—But I will not touch a plaintive ſtring. Violante is gone; and Heaven grant that I may prove, as ſhe told me I ſhould, the means

of

of reſcuing her from a courſe of life, whoſe firſt proſpect appears to be Paradiſe, and whoſe latter ſtages are Hell, to repeat an expreſſion from my Lecture to this very beautiful and temporary penitent. I am ſorry to ſay that Don Manuel gives me little hope of her laſting reformation.

You would be highly pleaſed, my dear Edmund, with my noble friend of Portugal. He is wonderfully active for his age, which is full 65, both in body and mind. His eyes ſtill retain all the fire of youth, though he is compleatly emancipated from the imperious folly of that ſeaſon, and thanks Heaven, he ſays, like old Sophocles, that he has at length got rid of the wild beaſt. He conſiders Love as the tranſient madneſs of early life; and thinks it the duty of every man, to whom age has given the ſecure poſſeſſion of his ſenſes, to ſuccour all who are labouring under this dangerous delirium. In ſhort, he is one of the moſt lively, pleaſant, and charitable elders, that I ever met with. My particular obligations to him are too great for any words to expreſs. But alas! I am ſoon to loſe the comfort of his ſociety. Some very preſſing and private affairs oblige him to reviſit his own country with the utmoſt expedition. I am to be removed this evening to the houſe of his neighbour, the good courteous aunt of Giuliana, with whom the Seignor is intimately acquainted, and whom he has kindly prepared for my reception. I can write no longer at preſent; but will add a few lines from my new quarters to-morrow, and then diſpatch to you the united fragments of a narration that will,

I am

I am afraid, afflict you, philoſopher as you are, much more than it ought to do.

What a bleſſed ſet of beings are all who are related to Giuliana! Their courteſy is the courteſy of the ſoul. Here have I been watched half the night by the good old lady under whoſe roof I am, exactly as if I were her own ſon. My condition in truth is ſuch as might excite pity in a leſs gentle boſom; for, bruiſed and ſhattered as I am, I make a moſt ſorry ſpectacle. The motion in removing hither, though rendered as eaſy as poſſible, ſeems to have hurt me not a little; and I am ſeized now and then with tortures ſo ſharp that I cannot ſuffer them in ſilence, though I endeavour to do ſo. Sad experience, my dear friend, has taught me,

"That ſighs and groans by nature grow on pain."

I have within me ſome internal miſchief, that my ſurgeon, who is a Frenchman ſent from Rome, either does not comprehend himſelf, or will not explain honeſtly to me. I am almoſt as ſick of his ſhrugs and evaſions as of my wounds and bruiſes. What would I give for half an hour's conference with the ſenſible, pleaſant, plain-ſpeaking Brenſil, my honeſt ſurgeon at Sedley-hall!—Ah! that dear houſe, and its divine miſtreſs!—I can proceed no farther without ſome reſt. Theſe tender recollections overwhelm me.

Let

Let me not alarm you, my dear Edmund, by my langor. I ſhall do very well in time, for my conſtitution has great ſoundneſs and ſtrength. I am much better within theſe three hours for a ſweet ſlumber; but I muſt ſleep again after writing theſe five or ſix lines; for they have given me, I believe, a very ſtrong opiate, as my eyes are cloſing, I perceive, while the pen is yet in my hand.

Oh! joyous waking! I have waked, my dear Edmund, to find my good angel ſeated on my bed. Giuliana is arrived. I cannot, I need not add more; for every thing good, every thing medicinal, every thing fraught with hope and comfort, is comprized in theſe happy words, "Giuliana is arrived."—— "But whither are you flying, my too anxious friend? do not leave my chamber yet, I conjure you. Tell me not of reſt and ſleep. They cannot be ſo ſalutary or ſo delightful to a wretch in pain, as the ſight and converſation of my heavenly Giuliana."—She comes again! She is ſeated by my ſide! She forbids me to write more! She will addreſs a billet to you herſelf. Oh, Edmund! what a perfect angel ſhe is! Heavens! how ſhe has talked to me of my Cornelia! With what eloquence, what enthuſiaſtic admiration, has ſhe diſplayed the merit to which I have been ſo barbarouſly blind! How has ſhe made me abhor all my paſt cruelty and injuſtice to the dear injured object of our mutual idolatry! But I muſt reſume this animating ſubject at

a calmer ſeaſon. I am now doubly exhauſted by pain and delight. I muſt lie quiet, and meditate with tears and gratitude on the exquiſite angelic tenderneſs of this incomparable friend. Farewell, my dear Edmund. Pray divulge not my follies or my ſufferings till I can ſpeak of them as I ought to the dear circle at Audley-Grove. Heaven bleſs you and all you regard! Pray write very ſoon, and tell me, if you can tell me ſo with truth, that Cornelia has not contracted a contempt for the pride and barbarity of

Your ſincere, affectionate,

and ſelf-reproaching,

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXVI.

FROM GIULIANA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

OH! my good dear Engliſh Father Edmund! How ſurpriſe, and joy, and pity, and fear, have made your poor Giuliana to tremble!

ble! In what a ſtate of body and mind have I found my guide, guardian and reſtorer, your beloved friend Seymour! Good God! if he ſhould not do well! But let me not too much affright my gentle Edmund.——A French ſurgeon of deep ſkill aſſures me our dear Seymour is not in danger to die ſoon; yet doubts if he ſhall recover. Oh! if ever you can leave dear glorious England for poor Italy, as you once promiſed, come now, my generous father Edmund; and as dear England produces the beſt of all good things, bring one of your beſt Engliſh ſurgeons to your beloved friend, whoſe poor body endures, I can ſee, more torment than his brave great ſpirit will confeſs.

I have ſtill much hope and it does me great good to ſee how happy he is in having me to come and attend him. He begins to ſee how hardly he has treated the ſweet Cornelia.—Ah! what a divine lady is ſhe! Alas! if ſhe ſhould be deſtined, like your poor Giuliana, to have her dear idol torn from her by cruel death, and all her treaſure in Heaven! Yet, my good Edmund, there is a ſweet melancholy and ſecure delight in this bitter fate; and your true Giuliana would not change her dead love for any living one in the world. But may the good God ſtill make your charming couple of friends very happy together upon earth; and afterwards with me and my dear adored Peverell in Heaven! So prays

Your grateful
Genoeze daughter,

GIULIANA.

Oh! if our dear Lucy would come with you, and bring the lovely injured angel Cornelia to Genoa!—How happy ſhould we be to meet you under our own roof! and how delightfully ſhould we all unite together to make a ſpeedy perfect cure of the engaging, penitent, Seymour! When I ſaid this to him, he replied, "No—it muſt not be. He felt he had deſerved ſuch kindneſs ſo little, that it would rather kill than revive him." His own words. But I know better and ſay again, "My dear Lucy, come and bring Cornelia, if you can. The good God bleſs you both! *Encor adio.*

LETTER XXVII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

ALIVE! Alive! my dear Edmund. But how can you, who know how much I live on that ſweet food of the heart, good tidings from thoſe I love, how can you ſuffer me to be ſo long without a letter from England! If the dear injured

injured Cornelia has baniſhed me from her mind, you, my faithful Edmund, will have only thought of me the more. But I am again injuring by my wild conjectures the divineſt of women, who forgets every injury, and chronicles every benefit, in a heart as pure and perfect as the records of Heaven!—Yet why, my dear Edmund, are you ſilent ſo long? This unuſual ſilence, in a correſpondent ſo tenderly attentive to your abſent friend as you have ever been, fills me with a thouſand fears. Some evil muſt have happened either to yourſelf, or to ſome one very dear to you.—No; my good conſoling angel, Giuliana will not have it ſo. She ſays, the foreign poſts are ill-conducted, and letters from *dear England* (her conſtant expreſſion when ſhe mentions our country) are frequently loſt. Oh, Edmund! this truly angelic comforter will not allow me to have a ſecret pain of mind or body that ſhe can poſſibly prevent. I muſt ſcribble volumes to you, if I attempted to give you a full idea of half what ſhe has ſaid and done to preſerve my life, and make it worth preſervation. I am made indeed a new creature in many points by the tender vigilance and exertions of this heavenly attendant. Oh, Edmund! if I recover—But why ſhould I alarm you with an *if*, when I am almoſt able to tell you that I *am* recovered.—Within the ſix days that I have now been watched and cheriſhed by my good angel, for as ſuch I muſt ever regard our dear Giuliana, I have made conſiderable advances towards health of body, and ſtill more towards health of mind. The moſt diſmal appearances of my contuſion are paſſed away; and though I am not perfectly free from internal pain at par-

ticular times, yet I can now not only ſtretch myſelf out to my full length, which I could not at firſt do without torture, but I can walk a little without appearing to ſuffer from motion.—The kind Giuliana has had a conſultation of ſurgeons, that ſhe might indulge me in a wiſh (which I feel with an extreme ſolicitude that I cannot perfectly account for) of being removed immediately to Genoa. My good old friend Pinelli, who is very anxious to have me under his own roof, is almoſt as eager for my removal as I am; and I confeſs I am eager for it to a degree perhaps of childiſh impatience. I cannot bear to trouble any longer the very kind, but infirm, old lady of this manſion. Whether my deſtiny be life or death (and I thank God! I can abide the doubtful iſſue without any perturbations of unmanly terror), I moſt zealouſly wiſh to receive the appointment of Heaven in the houſe of the Pinellis, where I ſhall feel myſelf perfectly at home, and in the arms of a father and a ſiſter to whom my heart is gratefully attached, and in whoſe preſence I can moſt willingly meet either the pleaſures of returning health or the awful though undreaded pangs of diſſolution. The kind Seignor has been very buſy in making preparations, with the ſanction of three ſurgeons, for my ſpeedy removal. We are to travel partly by water, and partly by land; and every poſſible convenience is provided for my ſafety and comfort. Oh, Edmund! I am overwhelmed with the ſenſe of my unutterable obligations to theſe dear and excellent friends. Pray aſſiſt me by expreſſing in your letters our united gratitude for all their goodneſs.—Write to me, I conjure you, the moment you receive this,

this, and direct to Genoa. On the day that I arrive there, I will not fail to tell you how I have ſupported the removal. You have now my permiſſion to mention my illneſs, but in ſuch a manner as to awaken only a tender intereſt, and not a painful anxiety, in the feeling boſom of Cornelia. Alas! I have given that gentle boſom too much pain already. Whether I ſhall ever have the power to atone for that pain, as my heart and ſoul are deſirous of making the atonement, Heaven only knows. Hope the beſt, my dear Edmund; and believe me, with our united good wiſhes to *dear England*, to uſe Giuliana's comprehenſive words,

Ever your ſincere and affectionate.

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXVIII

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER

MY VERY DEAR CHARLES,

IT was a good angel indeed (as Lucy ſaid) that prompted you to engage me in this diſtant expedition. Had I not viſited Italy, little, alas!

would my chance have been of ever beholding the intereſting countenance of our dear inconſiderate Seymour again. Even now, when I am arrived at Genoa, I know not whether I may yet ſee him alive. It is with the deepeſt anguiſh of heart I inform you, that I find him not in this city, and here he is ſlowly travelling hither, very grievouſly wounded by ſome horrid caſualty, the particulars of which I am unable to learn; it is yet a great comfort to me to know that he is under the immediate care of our dear Giuliana and her excellent father.

I have been interrupted, juſt as I was beginning to pour out to you all the dark anxiety of a dejected ſpirit, by a moſt welcome, unexpected, and for ſome time unknown viſitor. As we unluckily poſſeſs but little of each other's language, our converſation has paſſed more in geſture than in words. Our hearts, however, being both full of the ſame ardent wiſhes, underſtood each other completely; and mine has caught new life and hope from the honeſt affectionate creature, who laboured to the utmoſt of his power to inſpire me with both.

This agreeable enlivening viſitor is Pietro, the good old ſervant of Signior Pinelli, whoſe name and character you will recollect in Seymour's intereſting account of Giuliana's return to the houſe of her father. The active Pietro had haſtened to Genoa, to prepare all things at home for the reception of his family and their dear wounded fellow-traveller. The honeſt fellow, who did not quit them till they had paſſed through conſiderably more than half their journey, aſſures me that Seymour ſupports it *to admiration*, to uſe his own forcible expreſſion. He ſeems, indeed,

indeed, to think ſo highly of our friend's noble ſpirit, that I believe he hardly reckons him a mortal. At leaſt, he will not allow me to harbour the grievous apprehenſion under which I began my letter, that our friend may not reach Genoa alive. Pietro proteſts that I ſhall ſee him much recovered to-morrow. Indeed the kind fellow offered, on ſeeing all my terror and anxiety, to ſet off with me again directly, though he is but juſt arrived, and eſcort me to ſurprize my friend on his way But this I would not think of for various reaſons, eſpecially as it is now evening, and the travellers are to come by water from Lerici, to avoid the mountain.

I have acquieſced, however, in another propoſal of the good Pietro's, becauſe it ſeemed as if I ſhould break the honeſt fellow's heart if I refuſed his requeſt. This is, to remove immediately from my inn, where I am now writing, and ſleep under the roof of his maſter. He ſays, "he could never look in the face of the angelic Giuliana again, if he ſuffered her dear Engliſh father (as I find ſhe conſtantly calls me) to remain in any houſe but hers. There is a mixture of ſimplicity and energy in the manners of this affectionate old domeſtic that delights me exceedingly. The comfortable hope which he has taught me to cheriſh has made me ſo partial to him, that I ſhall very willingly put myſelf under his direction, as I am convinced the Pinelli's will be particularly pleaſed to find me waiting to receive them in their own manſion. I will not, however, detain this paper to add an account of their arrival; but ſeize the departing poſt in my eagerneſs to ſend you moſt ſpeedily this promiſing account; which I am the more anxious to

do, becauſe I think it probable that you have been alarmed by ſome hiſtory of the miſchance, the particulars of which I tried in vain to collect from Pietro, who yet ſeemed, I thought, to know more than he choſe to communicate even to me, though I have the honour of ſtanding very high in his good opinion. I ſhall lay down my pen in the chearful hope of reſuming it to-morrow, to begin ſuch a hiſtory as you will moſt wiſh to receive. Perhaps, my dear Charles, the painful incident, whatever it may prove, which has made me tremble for the life of my engaging friend, may ultimately be what you call a bleſſing in diſguiſe; one of thoſe heaven-directed events which lead us through tranſient affliction to laſting comfort, as ſome inundations very richly repay by permanent fertility the ravage of an hour.

The recent alarm which I have ſuffered for Seymour abſorbed my thoughts ſo entirely that I have ſaid little of myſelf. I will not, however, cloſe my letter, without confeſſing to you, my dear brother, what I know you will hear with fraternal ſatisfaction. I begin to think myſelf an example of your maxim, that to a mind diſpoſed to ſarcaſtic ſcepticiſm nothing is ſo ſalutary as a ſudden unexpected blow on the heart. Mine has bled indeed from the wound it received ſo ſuddenly in England, much more than I thought it could have done from a wound of that kind. But I now perceive that I wanted the correction; and I truſt it is ſufficient. Heaven preſerve my friend! Let me not run into a melancholy key, juſt in the moment when I intended to cloſe with a very chearful adieu! A thouſand thanks to you all for your extreme kindneſs

to

to my dear little Fanny; pray give her a parental embrace for me, and believe me, dear Charles, with the moſt fervent good wiſhes to all around you,

Your very grateful

and affectionate brother.

LETTER XXIX.

FROM THE SAME TO THE SAME.

AT length, my dear brother, they are arrived; and never did any meeting of anxious and grateful friends more abundantly call forth the tears of tenderneſs and delight, mingled, alas! on my part with the keeneſt ſenſations of pity and of terror.—I will not attempt, my dear Charles, to chear you with any hopes that I feel not myſelf; and I am therefore under the painful neceſſity of telling you, that the grievouſly altered appearance of our friend alarms me in the greateſt degree! Heavens! what a deplorable

ble change in his gay and gallant figure has this horrible calamity produced! His florid cheeks are grown as pale and hollow as the very image of death, his whole frame emaciated and feeble. —Yet his native chearfulneſs and good temper appear unimpaired; and there is a look of intellectual vigour in his countenance, ſuperior, I think, to what I ever obſerved in his moſt healthy days, though intelligence was at all times the characteriſtic of his features. We can eaſily account indeed for his being ſo extremely reduced, as he has taken no ſuſtenance but liquids, and thoſe only in ſmall quantity, ſince the horrible miſchance. Whenever he has ventured on the ſmalleſt portion of ſolid food, even of the ſimpleſt kind, his cough and pain became almoſt inſupportable. But I will not ſpeak farther on this point at preſent, as I am reſolved to draw up his caſe in the moſt circumſtantial manner that I poſſibly can, and encloſe it in this letter, entreating you to ſend us Brenſil's opinion upon it immediately, and deſiring him to let that opinion be followed by others, which I requeſt him to procure from thoſe perſons in London whom he would himſelf wiſh to conſult. They tell me here, that I am too much alarmed; that I do not make ſufficient allowance for the depreſſive and fearful effect which a ſudden ſight of the great alteration in his figure has produced on my anxious ſpirits. They ſay that time alone, aſſiſted by Seymour's very fine natural conſtitution, at his period of life, would undoubtedly accompliſh a cure. But as the injury ſuſtained was extenſive and complicated, the cure muſt be a work of conſiderable time. Heaven grant that theſe hopeful conjectures, in which the warm-

warm-hearted Giuliana and her father have much greater confidence than I have, may prove juſtly founded! At all events we ſhall try every poſſible expedient to reſtore him; and at preſent even I, with all my fears, muſt allow there is no immediate ſign of impending death.

I have quitted my paper to take a freſh view of this dear, intereſting patient, and have this inſtant left him under the care of his good angel, as he calls Giuliana, who is reading to him ſome chapters of St. John, from her Italian Bible. I have prevented his anſwering your very kind letter to-day, which he wanted to do. It affected him ſo much, that he dropt tears of gratitude on every page of it; and, having peruſed the whole with great but ſilent emotion, he gave it to Giuliana, with the following expreſſive words, and a look ſtill more expreſſive: "Here, my good angel! here is a letter that you will read with delight, becauſe it was dictated by a ſpirit as angelic as your own." Giuliana did not think leſs favourably of the writer; and you will give me credit, my dear Charles, for the joy I felt in hearing praiſe moſt cordially beſtowed on a brother whom I have every reaſon to love. But my beſt way of thanking you for all your kindneſs to my friend will be, to purſue the purpoſe for which I reſumed my pen, and to give you as good an account as I can of our meeting here, and of ſuch converſation as we have hitherto held together.

My eagerneſs to ſalute the travellers with a welcome they little expected, made me loiter yeſterday for ſome hours by the water-ſide, till Pietro, finding me faint and almoſt ſick with

expectation

expectation and anxiety, perſuaded me to retire for refreſhment, and wait to receive them at home, promiſing to tell them nothing more than that an Engliſh gentleman was arrived with letters, as I wiſhed to have the pleaſure of ſurprizing them. I had refreſhed myſelf, and endeavoured to beguile the anxious minutes in the Seignor's very noble library, where taking up a volume of Metaſtaſio, I had juſt thrown my nerves into a very tender vibration by his ſweet deſcription of Friendſhip in the opera of Olimpiade, when the dear friends for whom I waited ſo anxiouſly arrived.

Having heard that a gentleman from England was waiting in the library, Giuliana darted firſt into the room, with that celerity of motion which quick affections inſpire. "O Heaven'! exclaimed the lovely enthuſiaſt, it is my dear father, Edmund!" So ſaying, ſhe threw herſelf into my arms in a tranſport of gratitude; "This is kind indeed, ſhe continued; it is almoſt a miracle: ſurely you cannot have received my letter?" "No, my angelic daughter." "And have not you heard of our poor Seymour's ſad accident?" "Yes, I have." "Then ſurely, my dear Edmund, you are a magician, and have ſome ſecret art of knowing what happens to your abſent friends, and ſome ſupernatural method of conveying yourſelf to comfort them in diſtreſs. Bleſs the good Spirits who have brought you to the houſe of your far diſtant child, juſt in the moment when ſhe moſt wanted you to aſſiſt her in reſtoring your favourite friend!" Here ſhe embraced me with freſh emotions of truly filial delight. But recollecting how I muſt be ſhocked at the dreadful alteration in the countenance of her

dear

dear patient, ſhe was beginning to prepare me for a ſight of him, when his emaciated figure appeared ſlowly creeping through the half-open door. Giuliana had ſuppoſed him to be reſting himſelf in another apartment; but his quick ears had caught the ſound of *Edmund* on her firſt lively exclamation, and he had followed her as faſt as his infirm and painful condition would allow him to do. The firſt ſight of me affected him ſo much, that I believe he would have fainted, if I had not ſprung forward, and ſupported his languid frame in my arms. He fell on my neck, and burſt into tears; but ſoon recovered himſelf enough to expreſs the moſt lively joy on my arrival. He declared, with his uſual kindneſs and warmth, that my ſociety would do him more good than all the ſurgeons in Europe; and that now he had a perfect aſſurance of a ſpeedy cure, provided, ſaid the affectionate invalid with a look of anxious enquiry, that you can truly tell me you have left all the dear circle well at Audley-grove. "All well, I replied, or very nearly ſo, I can aſſure you, and the circle as numerous as it was, for I have ſent Lucy to fill the vacancy made by the return of the young Louiſa to Ireland." "What happy chance then, my dear Edmund, conducted you hither; for you muſt have quitted England, I think, before the news of my calamity could have reached it? "O, he is certainly a magician, as I have told him, ſaid the ſmiling Giuliana. He has conveyed himſelf to us in a very marvellous manner to-day, and to-morrow, I ſuppoſe, by a flouriſh of his wand, he will tranſport even the divine Cornelia into this apartment; and then, my dear

patient,

patient, he will have doubly ratified your cure." "Not ſo, indeed, my good angel, cried Seymour with a ghaſtly ſmile. If your magician were to exhibit ſuch a proof of his art at this ſeaſon, inſtead of reſtoring he would utterly demoliſh me. There is nothing that I could ſo ill ſuſtain as unmerited kindneſs from the injured object of my idolatry, before I have had time to make any kind of expiation." Oh! exclaimed the quick Giuliana, I love you for your ideas of expiation; but, if the dear magician can ſet the idol before us, I will anſwer for it that all paſt injuries ſhall be ſoon expiated and ſoon forgiven. This, I truſt, we ſhall ſee in due time: at preſent it would be wrong perhaps to make ſuch rapid and encroaching demands on ſo kind a magician. He has already done much for me; and the bleſſed hour is now come, in which I may in my turn afford him perhaps the very pleaſure which his heart is moſt eager to receive." "Oh! my dear Edmund, continued the lovely enthuſiaſt with an air of more ſerious delight, I cannot reſt another moment without informing you that the cruel impediment is removed. We have only to reſtore the health of this dear invalid, to confer upon your divine Cornelia all the happineſs ſhe deſerves.' "You delight me indeed, ſaid I, preſſing her hand in a tranſport of religious joy; and I am thoroughly ſenſible what thanks are due to our good angel for ſo bleſſed an event." "Oh! my good Engliſh father, replied my lovely and moſt grateful hoſteſs, how often have I hoped that Heaven would indulge me with ſome opportunity of expreſſing my gratitude to you in perſon! Did Seymour tell you,

after

after he had conducted your poor broken-hearted Giuliana to her distant home; did he tell you how often and how vainly I argued with him in our travels? did he mention one evening in particular (it was at Avignon) when my anxiety for his salvation had shaken my very soul? I threw myself on my knees, and addressing the spirit of my dear sainted Peverell, I prayed most fervently that in some period of my life I might have the blessing to behold my generous, misguided friend and protector, awakened to a just and timely knowledge of that God whom my dear departed love had taught me to worship with rational adoration! That prayer, my dear Edmund, that fervent prayer was heard. You may now tell the most severely-tried and the most meritorious of women, that all the cruel conflict in her bosom may cease for ever. You may tell the incomparable Cornelia, that she may now indulge without a scruple all the exquisite tenderness of her heart, for the God whom she has served so faithfully gives a sanction to her love."

"But where is my other father?" cried the lovely enthusiast, recollecting that I had not yet seen the old Seignor. "Oh, Edmund! it has pleased Heaven to bless me also by an equal change in his spirit: though it has not been my destiny, as I wished, to pass my life with my dear Peverell, yet my pure love for that most perfect of mortals has proved a source, I trust, of eternal blessedness, not only to my own soul, but to others as dear to me as my own." Here she darted a smile of devout chearfulness on Seymour, and after charging him not to hurt himself by conversing too eagerly with me, she left

us

us to ourſelves, and went in queſt of her father.

"What a perfect angel ſhe is! cried Seymour to me as our dear hoſteſs withdrew. Oh, Edmund! I am convinced that your calm and boaſted Philoſophy is but a plauſible cheat; and that Sentiment and Honour, the more eagerly-followed guides of my early life, are no better than luminous vapours to a benighted mind that lead it we know not whither. Your brother, my dear friend, is aſſuredly in the right. It is Religion alone, as he ſays, that can give ſolid value and real permanent luſtre to human life. It is Religion alone that can remove danger from proſperity, and anguiſh from affliction. Let me conjure you, my dear friend, to contemplate the beneficent efficacy of this principle in this angelic conduct and heavenly ſtate of mind that you will find more and more reaſon to admire in Giuliana; and if an oppoſite example may be alſo inſtructive, I need not point it out to my dear Edmund's attention. But on this ſubject we ſhall both, I truſt, have leiſure for much private diſcourſe, when talking will be more eaſy to me. Let me now enquire into a point that fills me with a moſt uncomfortable alarm; the letters that I have lately written to you. I would not for the univerſe have them fall into the hands of the dear injured Cornelia. Yet, if Lucy opens them, ſhe, in the ſimple, affectionate frankneſs of her heart—I interrupted him, to quiet this fear; and aſſured him his letters would be perfectly ſafe in your hands, as you have the moſt tender ſolicitude to keep the gentle ſpirit of Cornelia as free from all painful agitation as it can be kept after all that has paſſ-

ed.

ed. He was perfectly ſatisfied with this aſſurance, and ſpoke of you with the moſt cordial eſteem, gratitude, and confidence. He then queſtioned me very cloſely on the immediate cauſe of my expedition. I told him all that I have recently ſuffered; dwelling, my dear Charles, with particular ſatisfaction on the great comfort you afforded me in my diſtreſs, and your invaluable kindneſs to my dear little Fanny. We were both affected too vehemently in the courſe of my ſad ſtory, and I was afraid that the extreme ſympathy of my tender-hearted friend might be very injurious to him in his preſent weak ſtate. But he aſſured me to the contrary; and I obſerved with pleaſure that my mournful narrative conſiderably encreaſed that religious turn of mind which I have mentioned in our friend, and which, as I know, my dear Charles, it is the great object of your benevolent wiſhes, I am deſirous of diſplaying to you exactly as it ſhewed itſelf to me.

Juſt as I had finiſhed my melancholy tale, we were agreeably relieved from the ſad impreſſion it made upon us, by the entrance of the majeſtic Pinelli and his incomparable daughter. I never beheld a ſcene of joy ſo touching as the joy of Giuliana, in introducing her two fathers, as ſhe calls us, to each other. Indeed my vanity, or I may rather ſay the honeſt pride of my heart, was never more gratified than by the many kind and grateful things that were ſaid to me on this occaſion. As to Giuliana, her delight ſeemed to have in it ſomething ſupernatural; placing herſelf between us, as I and the Seignor ſtood together, ſhe claſped us in her lovely arms with a graceful energy of geſture

geſture peculiar to herſelf, and her fine face became indeed as radiant as the face of an angel. There was a circumſtance that I have not yet mentioned, which completed the plenitude of her joy. Her noble father having conducted his infirm gueſt and his daughter to his own door, ſtept without imparting his deſign to them to the neighbouring houſe of a very old medical friend, who lives retired from buſineſs, and is only conſulted as an oracle upon great emergencies. The anſwer of this oracle to the point on which he was conſulted inſpired the benevolent Pinelli with the moſt lively hopes of our dear friend's doing well; and the forcible manner in which the zealous Giuliana imparted to us this intelligence added not a little to the general felicity of the moment.

You will allow me, my dear Charles, to cloſe my long, though haſty letter, with this animating preſſage; Heaven grant it may be true! At all events you may depend on receiving freſh intelligence very ſoon. In the mean time I ſubmit it entirely to your ſuperior judgment and tenderneſs to communicate as much or as little as you think proper of this information to our very tender and intereſting Cornelia. Accept and diſtribute to all around you the ardent good wiſhes of this houſe, and particularly thoſe, my dear Charles, of

Your very grateful and affectionate

EDMUND.

LETTER

LETTER XXX.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER.

IT was very kind and conſiderate in you, my dear Edmund, to ſend me ſo ſpeedy a letter from Genoa, without waiting for the arrival of your expected friends. I had indeed, according to your conjecture, been alarmed in no moderate degree, by an account of Seymour's misfortune, which he had addreſſed to you. The privilege of peruſing the letters which have arrived in your abſence has coſt me dear: they have filled me with inquietude the more painful, becauſe it was ſuch as I felt myſelf under a neceſſity of confining to my own boſom. I could not venture to impart this alarming accident either to Lucy or Harriot, as neither would have had the power of keeping ſuch a ſecret from the piercing eyes of our anxious Cornelia, whoſe affections have ſo quickened her ſenſes, that I could hardly truſt myſelf, with ſo agitating a ſecret in my boſom, within the reach of their ſcrutiny.

I am grown, however, leſs fearful, ſince I have been comforted by the lively hopes of the honeſt Pietro, and ſtill more by the laſt letter addreſſed to you from Seymour. There is a paſſage in this letter which inſpires me with the moſt delightful of all expectations; I mean, a happy

happy change in the religious ſentiments of our friend, which, if his life is out of danger, as I truſt it is, will enſure to him that felicity in marriage which we are all ſo eager to ſee him attain. As to the preſent ſtate of our dear Cornelia's affections, I ſhall enable you to form a perfect idea of them, by imparting to you a few particulars of our private converſation. She is eager to ſeize all opportunities of chatting with me alone, on the flattering pretence that ſhe draws from my converſation the power of correcting the infirmities of her own tender mind, but in truth (though I believe ſhe is not aware of this motive) to indulge herſelf in converſing on her favourite topic, and to draw from me all the intelligence ſhe can. As we were yeſterday alone together, and engaged on our perpetual theme, I ſaid to her, "Now, my gentle friend, as there is a lovely frank ſimplicity in your nature, infinitely ſuperior to the artificial reſerve of your ſex, tell me candidly which would give you moſt pain, to hear that Seymour was dead or married." She ſtarted at my idea; and after the pauſe of a moment replied, "This is a cruel queſtion indeed; but I will be as frank as you deſire, and tell you that my mind immediately proclaims one anſwer, and my heart mutters another. Married! No! Diſtract me not with ſuch an idea. Yet what right, what reaſon have I——Oh! my good Audley, why will you ſhew me to myſelf in ſuch a hateful point of view! My Friend, my Guardian, my Director, clear my heart, I conjure you, if you can, from all theſe wild exceſſes of a hopeleſs paſſion, whoſe tyranny and injuſtice I perceive and deteſt."

Here

Here ſhe preſſed my hand in an agony of tears that made me reproach myſelf for the idle barbarity of my queſtion, though I hoped to make her ample compenſation for all the pain it occaſioned. But before I had time to do ſo, "Heavens! exclaimed the fond ſufferer, what a hideous inſight have you given me into my own troubled thoughts! how have you made me abhor the turn of mind that I have lately fallen into, and which I never condemned before, becauſe I never underſtood the ſecret cauſe of it till this moment!" Here my curioſity was very ſtrongly excited. I requeſted an explanation. "Do not hate me, my good Audley, ſaid this ingenious ſelf-accuſer, while I confeſs to you, I have lately thought it would be a bleſſing to Seymour, to be taken early from the world. I reaſoned thus: At preſent his life can be ſtained with no important evil; and he has hitherto employed himſelf in generous, munificent, and charitable deeds. In ſuch a character ſurely Heaven will either pardon his youth the unintended crime of incredulity, or in cloſing his exiſtence reveal to him in a merciful hour thoſe important truths to which he has hitherto been ſo unhappily blind. But if his days are prolonged under the tyranny of thoſe proud and diſappointed paſſions which have driven him abroad, what calamities may enſue, what a horrid change may be wrought in his noble nature! Thus under the idea of ſecuring his everlaſting welfare, my fond and feveriſh imagination has been ſometimes inclined to hurry him from the earth. But you have ſhewn me the hideous ſource of theſe ideas. I now feel for the firſt time, that they ſprung from a corrupted heart, labouring under

under a ſecret horror of beholding this object, ſo cruelly dear to me, the huſband of another. Oh! Audley, is it poſſible that Love, which boaſts of being the moſt diſintereſted, the moſt generous of all the paſſions, can be the moſt ſelfiſh of all? If it is, may I henceforth be alive only to that parental affection which partakes of the purity, though not the peace of Heaven! You flatter me on the reſolution with which I have tried to diſcharge the great duty of a mother; but I am willing to ſhew you all the unworthineſs which lurks in the ſpirit you have flattered, that I may the better engage you to aſſiſt me in correcting it. Aid me, I beſeech you, with thoſe ſtronger powers of mind, which have given ſuch envied tranquillity to your life. Help me to eradicate from my boſom a weakneſs ſo tormenting, ſo diſgraceful; and make me for my own comfort and your credit, more deſerving of your praiſe." She uttered the laſt ſentence with a tear and a ſmile that doubly endeared to me the tender frankneſs of her heart. How I thought it beſt to tranquillize her agitated ſpirit, you will eaſily gueſs. To an enamoured woman, a particle of hope is of more real value than a ton of reaſon; and as I had ſome good and honeſt hope to give, I beſtowed it on my gentle friend with particular delight, when I aſſured her that I had ſolid grounds for believing that Seymour had lately reſolved never to form a connexion with any other woman. Her ſoft and ſad features became almoſt as radient as ever. I mentioned his accident very ſlightly and as a mere trifle. It alarmed her, however, conſiderably; but I gradually diſſipated that alarm, and finally diſmiſſed our lovely friend

friend from this private conference, very viſibly cheared and enlivened. Having rendered this pleaſing little ſervice to a fervent though unwillingly votary of Love, let me perform another, equally pleaſing, for a certain parent, who, though new to me in that character, is not the leſs intereſting for ſuch novelty. Let me aſſure you, my dear Edmund, that your ſweet little Fanny is grown, not only dear to us on her own account, but as much at home as if ſhe had been educated here from her cradle. You would be diverted, as I am, to ſee what rivals Cornelia, Lucy, and Harriot, are, for the higheſt place in her affection. I am convinced, however, this diſtinction belongs completely to Cornelia, and from a cauſe which does honour to the heart of the dear little damſel. She has obſerved the air of melancholy and mental, or rather cordial diſtreſs, which is often viſible in the ſweet countenance of Cornelia; and this has awakened her early ſympathy, and made the tender Fanny attach herſelf peculiarly to the widow. She is, however, as ſprightly and playful as you would wiſh her to be; and to give you our idea of her character in a few words (which I ſhould tell you are the words of Lucy), ſhe has all your engaging qualities without one of your foibles.

I am obliged to bid you haſtily farewell; but I do ſo with the leſs regret, as I hope to receive to-morrow or next day the confirmation of our hopes, and to tell you immediately with what joy that confirmation is received by

Your affectionate brother.

P. S. My Three Graces, as I ſportively call them, ſalute you with every kind wiſh; and commiſſion you, not only to bring Seymour home to us as ſoon as you can, but the noble Seignor and Giuliana, to whom you are deſired to ſay for us every thing that is friendly.

LETTER XXXI.

FROM SEYMOUR TO CHARLES AUDLEY.

MOST truly and moſt ſucceſsfully, my dear Audley, have you followed a ſublime precept of the Religion which you ſo happily profeſs. You have indeed overcome evil by good. In reading the letter which you ſo generouſly ſent me by our dear unexpected Edmund, I know not which was the ſtronger, my ſenſe of your extreme kindneſs, or of my own demerit. How indulgent, how parental, has your conduct been towards me! and how ungrateful the return that I have hitherto made to ſuch favours! But my hour of retribution is come, not only towards you, my dear ill-treated friend, but towards that bright injured angel whoſe exquiſite

uiſite perfections you ſo nobly endeavour to im-preſs upon my heart. I have, perhaps, towards her

" Beyond atonement ſinn'd ;"

or I ſhould rather ſay, that Heaven will probably, with great juſtice, preclude me from an earthly bleſſing, whoſe real value I have been ſo ſlow to underſtand and acknowledge.

You will undoubtedly have a faithful account from Edmund, who is all kindneſs and attention to me, of my real apparent ſituation : but you cannot hear from him what I think it beſt to conceal at preſent from the infinitely tender and too anxious friends who ſurround me ; I mean, my own ſtrong perſuaſion, not only that I ſhall never behold dear England again, but that I ſhall drop this poor early-tattered veſtment of mortality much ſooner than my friendly attendants here will allow themſelves to imagine. Nor ſhould I, my dear Audley, impart this idea to you, had I not obſerved with what peculiar juſtice and felicity you have long eſtimated life and death. For my own part, I am thankful to my Creator that timidity has never been characteriſtic of my frame. When my mind was in utter darkneſs concerning futurity, I was a ſtranger to the dread of diſſolution ; and ſince that bleſſed Power, to whom I was blind too long, has illuminated my ſpirit with the promiſe of a ſuperior exiſtence, ſince he has allowed me (to uſe the words of a great living poet who is rich in religious eloquence)

" A flight into his arms
Ere yet mortality's fine threads give way ;"

I feel doubly confirmed in the idea, and in th
ſenſation, that Death is the laſt thing which
mortal ought to fear. Yet how many objec
my dear Audley, now preſs upon my fancy
that might render earth for ſome years a para
diſe to me! With what delight ſhould I behol
myſelf ſeated once again in that circle of perfe
benevolence, your hoſpitable manſion, awak
ened as I now am to a full ſenſe of all the ra
merit by which it is ennobled! with what tran
port ſhould I receive from your friendly han
that ineſtimable treaſure which you have wit
ſuch generous ardour excited me to deſerve
Oh! my dear friend, the being muſt be dea
to every fine emotion of the heart, who woul
not wiſh to live, while earthly bliſs of ſuch pu
rity and luſtre ſeems to ſolicit his enjoyment
I wiſh indeed—— but I have learned at laſt t
ſubmit the moſt preſumtuous of my wiſhes t
the will of Him "in whom we live and mov
and have our being."

How, juſt my dear Audley, was that moni
tory remark of yours, which I once refuſed t
admit, that pride was the great ſource of all m
errors, and all my infelicity! You allowed,
remember, it was a generous pride; and ſo in
deed it was in its appearance, but not in its e
fects. I entered young into ſplendid life, hea
thy, opulent, uncontrouled; conſcious that m
heart was free from every malevolent and ever
mean propenſity, I truſted entirely to the na
tive impulſe of an ardent and affectionate ſpir
I thought that Honeſty and Honour, to whom
felt myſelf inviolably attached, were unexceptio
able and ſufficient guides for my conduct. A
early inſight into the deſpicable characters
ſom

me unworthy prieſts gave me a ſtrong preju-
ice againſt Religion. I felt no attraction to-
ards a faith, whoſe miniſters of every ſect ap-
eared to me as a band of intellectual gladiators;
ho ſeemed to have done the very thing which
certain Philoſopher, with a benevolent ſarcaſm
ecommended to the Athenians, and as a
reliminary to their conflicts, to have pulled
own *the altar of mercy*. We agreed, I remem-
er, on this point, my dear Audley when you
ere ſo good as to converſe with me ſo patiently
and, alas! to ſo little good effect at that time)
n the ſources of incredulity: we agreed, that
he ferocity of Chriſtian Divines to each other is
common and extenſive ſource of Laical Irreli-
ion. How can a youth who has never ſtudied
is Bible, expect quiet and comfort from the
Goſpel, when he ſees thoſe who preach it very
furiouſly mangling their brethren, like the ſa-
vage rebels of Scotland who were routed by the
gallant Montroſe, and who uſed for their word
of battle, "*Jeſus and no Quarter!*" I am con-
vinced by my own paſt feelings on the ſubject,
hat no ſource of Infidelity is more powerful than
his. It has pleaſed Heaven to correct in a very
particular manner thoſe early prejudices of my
mind which I have ſtill ſuch ſingular reaſon to
lament. I have beheld the beneficial influence
of Religion in one of its moſt ſtriking examples;
I have ſeen it not only bind up the broken heart
of Giuliana, but confer upon her an angelic ſe-
renity, ſweetneſs, and ſtrength of mind, which
under her cruel calamity, nothing elſe could
have given her; it has enabled her not only to
ſubdue the moſt depreſſive of paſſions in her own
boſom, but to new-mould the heart and ſpirit of

an exaſperated and worldly-minded father; and finally, my dear Audley, it has enabled her to accompliſh that converſion which has been ſo much the object of your friendly deſires. How far the bodily anguiſh, the ſhame, and the diſguſt, which I have felt in reflecting on ſome recent occurrences, may have contributed to this event, I will not attempt to examine.

"A Fever argues better than a Clarke,"

is a ſenſible and ſpirited line of Young's, that you quoted to me, I remember, in expreſſing a hope that you might one day ſee our dear Edmund alſo converted; a fraternal hope, which, I muſt tell you, my good Audley, is even now on the point of being fulfilled, and which, if it is as I believe my deſtiny to die ſoon, I moſt ſincerely pray that my death may complete. For my own part, at the earneſt requeſt of our angelic Giuliana, I have devoted the daily leiſure of an invalid, to hear and meditate on the Goſpel. It has been very aſſiduouſly preached to me by this lovely and eloquent preacher, whoſe own life affords ſo ſtrong an argument in its favour; it has entered into my heart and ſoul. In liſtening deliberately to the New Teſtament, I am indeed completely perſuaded that Chriſt is the true Ambaſſador of God! I require no other credentials than his own affecting hiſtory, with the marvellous power of his precepts, to militate againſt every evil by which human nature can be aſſailed, and to counteract all the agents of darkneſs. After a cool and candid, though brief compariſon of Philoſophy and Revelation, I feel moſt ſtrongly impreſſed with the idea that

no

no being could have delivered a ſyſtem of inſtruction ſo perfectly adapted as the Goſpel is to all the weakneſſes and wants of man, except a perſonage inſpired and commiſſioned by his Creator. If I examine the conduct of individuals, or of communities, I perceive that every abuſe of Chriſtianity, every deviation from its primary precepts, is attended either by miſery or peril. If I ſearch into my own boſom, I find the fulleſt internal proof that Chriſtianity alone (as you, my dear Audley, once ſaid with ſo much kindneſs and truth) can ſupply me with a proper corrective for the conſtitutional impetuoſity of my ſpirit, and an antidote to the poiſon of my own preſumptuous and deluſive imaginations. I am not afraid of tiring you on this ſubject, becauſe I know all the warmth and all the tenderneſs of your friendly zeal. As I have formerly given you much pain by uttering the prouder ſentiments of my miſguided ſpirit, I am the more ſolicitous to ſhew you at preſent how truly I ſtand corrected; though, alas! for our temporal happineſs this correction is come too late. Ah! my dear Audley, muſt I give you ſo hard a proof of the ſtrength and ſincerity of my new faith, as to reſign without a murmur that ineſtimable bleſſing, which you, in exhorting me to ſubdue my incredulous pride, ſo generouſly propoſed to me as an incentive and a reward? Muſt I expire without a benediction from that offended angel Cornelia? without expreſſing to her with my own lips the perfect homage of my corrected heart? and without receiving from hers a ſingle, tender kiſs of reconcilement, peace, and pardon?

Perhaps it is better that I cannot be indulged in ſo fond an inclination; perhaps it is ordained ſo by that God of Mercy whom I acknowledge and obey, in compaſſion to that dear and deep ſufferer: ſhaken as her health has been by the barbarity of my frantic love, ſhe could not now ſupport the anguiſh of ſuch a perſonal adieu.—No, my divine Cornelia, I will not wiſh to ſoften even the pangs of death by an indulgence that might prove ſo injurious to thy lovely frame.—Let me rather ſtrive to emulate thy perfection, and make the fondeſt emotion of my heart ſubmit with reſignation to the will of that God to whom thou haſt adhered with a tenderneſs, truth, and fortitude, ſo angelic. Oh! thou moſt exquiſite of women! my proud ſpirit, which once inſulted thee ſo cruelly, now does thee full juſtice. Thy triumph is complete—my heart at this moment idolizes thee more than ever, and at the ſame time I revere thee in my ſoul. Thy ſiſter-angel Giuliana yields the palm to thee; that generous admirer of thy excellence, if I commend her as a ſtriking example of religious virtue, will hardly allow that ſhe has any merit compared to my Cornelia. "I have done nothing, ſhe ſays, which I did not learn to do from the man I adored; and perhaps his pure ſpirit has miniſtered to my ſupport. If I attached myſelf to God, it was in the hope and the conviction that He would lead me to my love.—How different, how ſuperior, is the heavenly perfection of your Cornelia, who, in a trial the moſt excruciating that could be deviſed for a boſom ſo tender, tore herſelf from the idol of her heart, and adhered to Heaven!"—Such is the affectionate applauſe that our

our lovely foreigner beſtows on the unſeen Cornelia! How would ſhe ſpeak of her, were ſhe as thoroughly acquainted with the enchanting graces of her perſon, as with the purity of her conduct!—To you, my dear Audley, who know it ſo well, it ſeems ſuperfluous to ſpeak of my Cornelia's perfection; but it is the paramount ſubject of my thoughts; and as I am writing to you moſt probably for the laſt time, I reſtrain not my pen, but pour out every idea as it ariſes in my mind—it is time however, both for your ſake and my own, to cloſe this long letter.—Farewell, my indulgent, my generous friend: if it prove my lot, as I am more and more perſuaded it muſt, never to claſp again your benevolent hand, let me live in your remembrance! Think of me, I need not ſay kindly, for kindneſs is the characteriſtic both of your temper and your religion!—Let me intreat you, though I feel indeed that ſuch a requeſt is unneceſſary (yet, to relieve my own heart, let me entreat you) to break by all your gentle and friendly addreſs the ſhock of my unexpected death to Cornelia. I know, pure angel as ſhe is, I know that I am very dear to her; and even now, while my life is rapidly vaniſhing away, I feel a delicious pride in that knowledge, which, however ſhort my exiſtence may be, I would not relinguiſh for the world. I am aware that her affection for me muſt produce on this occaſion no trifling anguiſh in her tender boſom; but that anguiſh will be blended with more permanent delight, the delight of reflecting on our mutual love, not only without thoſe cruel pangs of terror and remorſe which have hitherto attended ſuch reflection, but with

hopes as firm as the veracity of Heaven, in whoſe beatitude I am confident we ſhall finally be united. I will employ my laſt hour on earth, if I have ſtrength to do ſo, in bidding her farewell.—If I have not, you, my dear Audley, will remember my intention, and ſooth her ſorrow for me, by every teſtimony of my love —you, my friend, will be a better guardian than I could have been to her two charming boys. Let not the brave little heart of the heroic William forget me utterly; but recall me now and then, I beſeech you, to his tender recollection. What exquiſite delight I might have had in training this noble-minded child into that engaging, accompliſhed, manly character, which I truſt, for his own and his lovely parents ſake, he is deſtined to form; but I have not indeed deſerved ſuch delight. The juſtice, and I ſhould ſay, perhaps, the wiſdom of Providence aſſigns me a very different fate. Yet I feel for this dear, intereſting boy; who will have all the quick ſenſibility of his mother, with all the fire of his own ſex; I feel for him at this moment the moſt poignant parental ſolicitude. I am forcibly ſtruck by an idea that it is poſſible for me to prove a very uſeful monitor to him long after I ſhall have ceaſed to exiſt, if I had yet ſtrength enough to execute a deſign I have conceived. But, alas! my dear Audley! the ſhades of death are even now gathering round me—the pen drops from my hand; a faintneſs like diſſolution itſelf begins to ſteal upon my ſenſes—it is but tranſient—it comes—it goes—it returns—O! my dear friends! and dearer than every friend, my Cornelia! my heart is not yet chilled; it ſtill embraces you with its native impaſ-

ſioned

ſioned ardour, and ſtruggles againſt this death-like langor, that it may beſtow upon you all the fervent benediction of

Your truly faithful

and affectionate

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXXII.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER.

ALAS! my dear Charles, what heart-rending ſcenes have I had to ſuſtain! but they are paſſed. We have loſt that enchanting friend whoſe heart I verily believe was the warmeſt and moſt generous that God ever beſtowed upon a mere mortal.—Our beloved Seymour expired yeſterday evening. Giuliana and myſelf had the grievous, yet delightful office, of catching his lateſt ſigh. He died with his head reſting on her boſom, and his hand claſped in mine.—No human eye ever beheld a more affecting or

ore

more enviable death; it was indeed the death of a true Chriſtian, and ſuch as might induce the moſt callous Infidel to renounce his Infidelity, and exclaim in a devout triumph,

O Grave, where is thy Victory?
O Death, where is thy Sting?

He had in a moſt ſingular degree what he had particularly prayed for the full poſſeſſion of his faculties to his laſt moment; indeed they were rather brightened than impaired.—I do not remember to have read of any perſon except the French Chancellor Seguier, whoſe intellectual powers appeared with ſuch luminous vigour in the cloſing hours of life. All the engaging peculiarities of our dear Seymour attended him to the laſt. His generoſity, his courage, his imagination, were never more conſpicuous than on the day of his deceaſe.—Through the whole courſe of his malady, he diſcovered a perfect exemption from that very common and pitiable ſelfiſhneſs, which is ſo apt, even in noble characters, to ſpring up with diſeaſe, and contaminate the cloſing ſcene of many honourable lives. So far from feeling the timidity of an invalid, and being anxious to ſpare himſelf, he conſiderably encreaſed his bodily ſufferings, and accelerated perhaps, in ſome degree, his laſt moment, by his repeated exertions in writing, from which we found it impoſſible to reſtrain him. His long reply to your kind letter he intended to diſpatch to you immediately; but after he had ſealed it, he changed his mind, and begged me to encloſe it with a ſhort billet (which he hoped, he ſaid, to write

to

to Cornelia,) in the firſt packet that I ſhould ſend you upon his death; beſides theſe letters, he has written others which affected him very much, but he took particular pains that I might not know to whom they are addreſſed; a reſerve which ſurprizes me the more, becauſe he has fully talked to me on the diſpoſition of all his extenſive property, and appointed me his executor. He inſiſted on writing his own will, which is by no means a ſhort one; and it was indeed to the dear invalid a work of conſiderable labour and pain. He has fully diſplayed in it all the tenderneſs and magnanimity of his corrected ſpirit. I am perſuaded that he has not omitted a ſingle perſon who had any claim, however inconſiderable, to his remembrance; at preſent, however, I will only mention to you a few of his bequeſts.—After giving his landed and patrimonial eſtate to his nameſake and legal heir, with expreſſions of regard and eſteem, he diſpoſes of his perſonal effects, which are various and valuable. To Cornelia he gives only a picture of himſelf, and the watch he wore; but he aſſigns a conſiderable ſum, from which he requeſts her to take annually an hundred pounds on the birth-day of her eldeſt ſon, and beſtow this ſum, or more if ſhe thinks proper, as a marriage portion on the moſt meritorious humble pair within the wide circle of her patronage. To her eldeſt ſon he bequeaths a caſket of jewels, which he has ſealed up himſelf, and which is not to be opened till the period fixed for its delivery, the day when young Sedley ſhall be of age, a day which the teſtator deſires me and Lucy, if we are alive, to aſſiſt in celebrating at Sedley-Hall. I believe this legacy is of very

ſingular

ſingular value. Moſt of theſe rare gems belonged to the mother of our friend; and as he valued them more for her ſake than for their own coſtly charms, he has ever kept them within his reach; and in his hours of tender regret for her untimely loſs, I have ſeen him kiſs her favourite ornament of intermingled emeralds and diamonds with as much fond devotion as a Catholic would beſtow on the reliques of a Saint. To balance this bequeſt to the elder Sedley, he has given his excellent library to the younger boy. To you, my dear Charles, he has given the choice of three pictures; to honeſt Danvers, a thouſand pounds; to the Monſons, two.—— But I cannot bear to talk any longer on this ſubject, and thus to repeat his whole teſtament with the apathy of a Jew by items; yet I muſt mention one memorial of his truly Chriſtian forgiveneſs. He has bequeathed a ring with a ruby of conſiderable value to Dr. Ayton; and with an expreſſion borrowed from his favourite Sterne, he bequeaths it as a peace-offering to a true and conſcientious miniſter of God, from a man who once thought and ſpoke of him with injurious aſperity. Surely no man ever quitted the world with a greater degree either of benignity or of courage. Theſe indeed were his two primary characteriſtics; and he diſplayed them to the laſt, with the moſt affecting frankneſs, but without a particle of oſtentation.—— When the angelic Giuliana expreſſed to him her comfort in beholding him ſo ſingularly free from the fear of death; "O! my good angel, he replied, though I leave in this world what the human heart may be allowed to regret, yet ſurely in the next I can have nothing to fear: I have done,

done, I acknowledge, ſome fooliſh and ſome wicked things; but I truſt they are fully expiated by my ſincere contrition, and perfect reſignation to the will of the Almighty. Under circumſtances peculiarly trying to a ſpirit ſo affectionate as mine, perhaps, my dear Giuliana, I could not meet Death ſo compoſedly as you now ſee me ſinking into his arms, if I were not impreſſed with an idea that my early departure from the earth, like that of your beloved Peverell, may prove a greater bleſſing to ſome objects of my regard, than my life perhaps might have proved." In uttering theſe words, he caſt a look of inexpreſſible kindneſs upon me—for he alluded to a diſcourſe which had paſſed between us a few days before, and which he had cloſed with this tender and memorable expreſſion. "I exult, my dear Edmund, in the idea that my death will ratify your converſion."—There could indeed be no ſtronger perſuaſive to Chriſtianity, than the death of ſuch a Chriſtian. Who could refuſe to acknowledge the beneficial influence of Religion, in ſeeing how it had given both ſoftneſs and energy to a ſpirit once ſo impatient of diſcipline and advice—in ſeeing that it taught him, not only to relinquiſh life without murmuring, and juſt at a period when it offered him the very object of his impaſſioned idolatry, but to chear his mind with a perſuaſion that his death might prove religiouſly beneficial to thoſe whom he loved?—About two hours before he expired, he threw his arms round Giuliana and me, as he reſted between us, and exclaimed with a moſt pathetic fervency of ſpirit, "Oh, God! let me not prove a ſource of injurious grief and anguiſh to theſe dear friends.

—No,

—No, I beſeech thee, make me, both living and dead, make me only an inſtrument of good to all the objects of my affection!"—Nothing has comforted him ſo much as the idea that his death may be ultimately more a bleſſing than a misfortune to Cornelia. In this idea, which he firſt conceived in remarking the angelic ſtate of mind ſo viſible and ſtriking in Giuliana, he has been encouraged by that good angel, ever ſince ſhe found that there was no chance of his recovery, and that it almoſt offended him to ſuppoſe he could recover. It is impoſſible to deſcribe to you all her infinite attention and kindneſs to her dear patient—but I muſt mention the manner in which Seymour ſpoke of it.—— As ſhe quitted his room yeſterday morning, he ſaid to me—"How kind, how admirable is Giuliana, never to diſtreſs me by tears! Her tenderneſs towards me is extreme; it ſurpaſſes the tenderneſs of woman; it has all the calm ſublimity of angelic viſitation! Her love to Peverell has made her the bleſſed being that we admire. Oh, Edmund! there is nothing more ſublime, or perhaps more deſirable in life, than affection thus tempered by piety, and ſtrengthened inſtead of being impaired by the unexpected removal of its idol from earth to Heaven. Let me but perſuade myſelf that I ſhall prove in dying as much a ſource of good to my Cornelia, as Peverell has proved to Giuliana; and under that perſuaſion I can moſt thankfully embrace my fate! It is poſſible that I may be ſo yet more than Peverell! Oh, Edmund!"——Here he ſeemed inclined to impart to me ſomething that he thought of moment: but he repreſſed himſelf; and one of his frequent fits of extreme langor coming on,

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I grieve to add another piece of painful intelligence to this melancholy letter. The good old Seignor is confined by illneſs to his bed, ſo that Giuliana has had double occaſion for all her ſtrength both of mind and body. Her exertions have been almoſt ſupernatural. I believe her father will recover, but I cannot leave her while he continues ſo ill. I have given orders to ſecure the dear remains of our departed friend in a leaden coffin; and as ſoon as my worthy old hoſt revives, I ſhall ſet forth on my return with my mournful charge, and perhaps take my paſſage in ſome veſſel from hence. At all events I will land at Dover, where I entreat you my dear Charles, to let me find letters waiting for me from you; and do not fail to inform me how our poor Cornelia ſupports this unexpected calamity. Alas! ſhe has not ſo ſtrong a frame as Giuliana; but it is the bleſſed privilege of Religion, to ſupport both the ſtrong and the weak. I am inclined to wiſh that Lucy and my dear little girl could meet me at Dover. Yet, on ſecond thoughts, I cannot bear to expoſe them to many tedious days, perhaps, of diſappointed expectation at an uncomfortable inn. Let me find, however, ſoothing letters from you all; for I feel that the office of conducting our dear breathleſs friend to that ſhore, where I hoped to ſee him receiving and imparting delight to ſo many that are dear to me, will be a bitter office indeed to the dejected ſpirit of

Your grateful and affectionate

EDMUND.

LETTER

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Your grateful and affectionate

EDMUND.

LETTER

LETTER XXXIII.

FROM SEYMOUR TO CORNELIA.

Incloſed in the preceding.

MY ever ardently beloved, though once inſulted Cornelia! it pleaſes Heaven to chaſtiſe my proud and blind barbarity towards you, by taking me haſtily from the earth juſt when I might render its prime ornament my own. The pride, the fierceneſs, the arrogance, the ingratitude, the impiety of your miſguided but affectionate Seymour, are now corrected for ever.—— Of all my vehement ſentiments towards you, I retain only thoſe of love and admiration. My admiration and my love were never more intenſe than in this hour, when I feel my life haſtening to its end; they will adhere to me to the lateſt moment of my mortal exiſtence, if my memory continues unimpaired; and they will attend me, I am perſuaded, into a bleſſed futurity. I have written to you more than once within theſe two days, and burnt my letters.— My heart and ſoul tell me they have a million of kind and ſerious things to ſay to you; yet when I attempt to throw any of theſe things on paper

paper they offend me, by being either too weak for my feelings, or too ſtrong for yours. My fluttering ſpirit is divided between the eager deſire of ſending you a laſt farewell, expreſſing all my encreaſed, improved, enlightened affection for you, and the anxious dread of giving more pain to that infinitely tender boſom which I have barbarouſly tortured already. O! thou moſt lovely moſt ingenuous of women; with what delight ſhould I expiate my paſt offences towards thee, by living only to cheriſh and applaud thy perfection. But Heaven requires a very different, a ſevere expiation: the hand of death is upon me; it tears me from my Cornelia!—— I muſt be either leſs or more than man, could I refrain from telling you how I feel in every fibre of my heart the unutterable anguiſh of ſuch a ſeparation; yet I acknowledge the graciouſneſs of God, who, in dividing me from an object ſo intenſely dear to me, has called me to himſelf. O Cornelia! this alone could have enabled me to quit thee thus, I cannot ſay without pain, but I can ſay without a murmur. O Heaven! behold my reſignation, and, if it is meritorious (as I truſt it is), reward it by pouring the pureſt of thy bleſſings on that juſtly valued idol of my heart, from whom I depart at thy command. Let me live in her affection, not to afflict, but to ſooth, to animate, to fortify her mild, gentle ſpirit. Let my fatal errors be made ſources of inſtruction and ſecurity to her beloved children. Oh, my Cornelia! thy precious boys are as dear to me as to thy own maternal heart. I have endeavoured—alas! I have not ſtrength enough to tell you what in time will tell itſelf. I am dying—but I die with

with my eyes perfectly opened to the mercies of my God, and to all the rare merit of my inſulted and idolized Cornelia, the moſt lovely of his works, as well as the moſt faithful of his votaries. Oh! Cornelia, I am dying; but in death I feel a pride (it is a pardonable pride) in your affection; you have loved me, you will continue to love me; and that angelic attachment, though ſaddened by grief, yet now untroubled by terror of ſelf-reproach, will be dearer and more delicious to your heavenly ſpirit, than all the gay vanities of the world. O Cornelia! what a proud heart have I had, ſince I can diſcover pride (but, I thank Heaven, it is a purified ſort of pride) blending itſelf even in theſe moments with my love, and with my religion! I bow to the will of God; I feel that I am going to his preſence; my ſoul is not terrified, but impreſſed with ſentiments for which I have no language. I feel only that I am going to appear before Him who created, and who will ſupport my Cornelia, as he has ſupported her ſiſter angel Giuliana, juſt ſeated by my ſide, and uniting at my requeſt her tender benediction to this adieu! O ye two lovely and bleſſed ſpirits! ſiſters in affliction, in tenderneſs, in purity, reflect only on the obligations which I acknowledge to you both! Ye have been the miniſters of grace, who have opened to me the gates of that Heaven for which I am departing. While you continue pilgrims of the earth, pray cultivate your friendſhip for each other, and remember that I bid you farewell in the firmeſt confidence that we ſhall be eternally united in the beatitude which is promiſed to us by Him whom you have taught me to revere! Farewell,

thou

thou idol of my heart, whom I can only behold in idea! Yet ſo ſtrongly art thou preſent to my affection, that I ſeem to claſp thy hand at this moment. Oh, Cornelia! let me indulge this fond illuſion, and ſeem to pour into thy tender boſom the laſt affectionate ſigh of thy expiring

SEYMOUR.

LETTER XXXIV.

FROM GIULIANA TO CORNELIA.

Incloſed alſo in Edmund's Letter with the preceding.

Very dear though never ſeen Friend.

I MUST tell you in few ſad words that my ſenſe of what your poor gentle heart has now to ſuffer, makes all my old wounds to bleed afreſh. We are veritably ſiſters in affliction, as our dear dying Seymour has ſaid; but the good God

God who ſupported unworthy me ſo graciouſly, will not fail to ſupport my pure gentle ſiſter, who has title ſo much better than I to protection from Heaven. O, how the good God ſhewed his goodneſs in making obedient and truly Chriſtian the high and long-rebel ſpirit of our dear friend! How did I wiſh to die as he died, in his place; that might have made us all happy; but our Almighty good governor knows what is beſt for us, better than we know; and, my dear ſick father ſtill wants his poor child upon earth; if it pleaſe God to make him well again, we will come to dear England, and I will tell my ſweet gentle ſiſter in affliction much more than my troubled mind can now write. I will come and ſooth her bleeding heart, by telling her what thouſand things her dear dying Seymour ſaid, and all ſo divinely juſt and kind, of his beloved Cornelia. I will come and talk and weep with you, my dear ſiſter-mourner, day after day; but at preſent I can only repeat, May the good God ſupport and conſole you! I know you will kindly receive this brief cordial prayer from

Your truly ſympathetic

and affectionate ſiſter

GIULIANA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXV.

FROM MR. AUDLEY TO HIS BROTHER.

PREPARED as I was, my dear Edmund, for the grievous event which your laſt kind letter imparts to me, it has afflicted me ſo deeply as to ſhake even my health. What a bitter iſſue to all our friendly hopes and projects! But we muſt not murmur; and it would be particularly wrong to do ſo, when the Almighty and Allwiſe Diſpoſer of events is ſo gracious as to mingle conſolation with our diſtreſs. However wrong and miſguided the life of our enchanting friend may have been, he has died the death of the righteous; and we ought not, perhaps, to mourn ſo deeply for him on earth, when there is joy over him in Heaven: but it is impoſſible not to feel extreme pain in the loſs of a being whoſe qualities were ſo delightfully engaging. For my own part, I muſt confeſs, his pathetic farewell to me has made ſuch an impreſſion upon me, that my nerves are become almoſt as tremulous as thoſe of our poor Cornelia, who is, I will not ſay afflicted, but Affliction itſelf. I never beheld ſorrow more poignant, or indulged with more avidity. She ſays, "the anguiſh of heart

heart that ſhe endures on this occaſion is a very juſt puniſhment for her having thought ſo inhumanly that his death would be no misfortune." But I am forgetting, my dear Edmund, that at the time you will open this letter, which I diſpatch to wait for you at the port appointed, you will be able to procure ſpeedy, and I hope better intelligence of us all, from thoſe who are as eager to fly into your arms in the hour of your landing, as you can be to embrace them. I have a moſt fortunate opportunity of gratifying your wiſh in this article; an obliging friend has juſt offered me the uſe of his vacant and commodious apartments in Dover-Caſtle, upon my accidentally mentioning your wiſh. Lucy and her dear little charge are preparing to ſet forth from hence, and are as happy as our preſent ſtate of general mourning will allow them to be, in the idea of waiting in the comfortable quarters that I have accepted for them, to receive you in the hour of your arrival. I will not detain you from their embraces, by adding more to this letter, except a requeſt that, as ſoon as you have diſcharged your laſt duties to our dear departed friend, you will bring both our ſiſter and the dear little Fanny back again to this houſe; where Affliction, my dear Edmund, longs to ſate itſelf on all the many mournful things you have to tell us minutely, where every perſon is wiſhing to ſee you arrive, and none more heartily than

Your affectionate Brother.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVI.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO CORNELIA.

Dover Caſtle.

I WILL write only to my moſt afflicted friend; and I ſhould be a valuable comforter indeed, if my powers of ſoothing her ſorrow were equal to the influence that ſhe has upon my thoughts. Abſorbed as you are in grief, it will, I know, ſtill pleaſe you to hear, that I and my dear little companion are ſafely arrived, and ſafely lodged in our Caſtle. Our accommodations are ſo good, our proſpect of the town below us, and of the calm quiet ſea beyond it, is ſo ſoothing to my mind in its preſent penſive and melancholy ſtate, that I almoſt repent of having oppoſed my dear Cornelia's idea of attending us; yet it is ſurely better for you, my dear ſuffering friend, to remain in the more ſoothing ſolitude which you may command at Audley Grove, with the additional advantage of comforters ſo tender and ſympathetic as Harriot and my brother. For Heaven's ſake, let me ſpeedily have the ſatisfaction of being aſſured, by your own hand, that you are a little revived! —that your pure, noble, and truly angelic ſpirit begins to triumph over that deplorable de-

preſſion which ſeemed to rob you of more than half your exiſtence! Conſider, my incomparable friend, what duties, what delightful duties, you have long to fulfil on earth! Where can we behold a mother who has a fairer proſpect of parental gratification, not only from the extreme lovelineſs of her children, but from the honeſt praiſe which all who love her beſtow on the ſuperlative merit of her maternal conduct? To quarrel with this merit as a ſource of our preſent bitter affliction, muſt be not only extreme injuſtice to yourſelf, but no leſs ingratitude to God, who even in afflicting us, as the kind Audley obſerved to you, has granted the firſt object of all our prayers.—Recollect, my dear Cornelia, a noble, affectionate, angelic ſentiment of your own, that you once uttered to Harriot. You told her, and I am ſure it was with ſincerity you told her, "that you would gladly renounce all expectations, and every wiſh, of ſeeing Seymour again in this world, if ſome kind angel would give you an aſſurance of meeting him in heaven." We have now this bleſſed aſſurance—our ſpirits devoutly embrace it as heavenly conſolation; but, alas! our hearts have ſtill ſo much of human weakneſs about them, that they ache with ſelfiſh agony, even while we are ſtriving to contemplate only the beatitude of the beloved friend we have loſt—Out upon the vanity of conſolatory diſcourſe, it is not worth a ruſh! I am a conſiſtent creature indeed, to exhort you not to grieve ſo intenſely, when my own heart at this moment is burſting with grief, and tears guſh upon my paper. Time only, co-operating with Religion, can do us eſſential good, under a loſs ſo grievous and unexpected. Write to me, my

dear

dear friend, I entreat you, as ſoon as you have even the ſlighteſt perception of their lenient effect; and believe me, with the kindeſt wiſhes to you and all with you,

Ever your affectionate

and ſympathetic

LUCY.

LETTER XXXVII.

FROM CORNELIA TO LUCY AUDLEY.

YOU are very good, my deareſt Lucy, to ſhew ſuch kind attention to the poor half diſtracted and half ſtupified creature who has but too much occaſion, as Heaven knows, for all the kindneſs of her friends, to raiſe and awaken her to a juſter ſenſe of her duty; but, frank and ſincere ſoul as you are, how can you flatter me with ſuch unmerited, and therefore ſuch cruel praiſe! — O! thou dear and compaſſionate confident of my moſt ſecret thoughts and ſufferings, had I truly ſo much virtue as your partiality imagines, why does it not comfort and ſupport me now? why do I feel as if this terrible ſtroke

of Providence had plunged me in a ſtate far worſe than annihilation, as if it had left me only a withered and waſted ſpirit, which ſeems to have no faculty but that of ſeeing and lamenting its own miſery and unworthineſs? You talk to me of maternal delight; but, alas! my good girl, what delight can I take as a mother, when in looking on my children, my own miſerable ſenſations ſuggeſt to me that it would have been better, both for me and for them perhaps, if ſuch a wretch as I am had never been born—O God! pardon me, I beſeech thee, for theſe unrighteous murmurs of a wounded heart, that break from it perforce. I confeſs their iniquity, I abhor their ingratitude. I acknowledge, I am thankful for thy mercy, which, in taking ſo ſuddenly from the earth the dear object of my hapleſs affection, has called him into thy preſence, where I alſo, if I can but ſuſtain this bitter trial as I am bound to do—O! gracious God! look with pity on my diſtreſs and terror; let not the ſubtle enemy of ſouls take ſuch advantage of my extreme weakneſs, as to darken and debaſe my ſpirit with ſuch black and rebellious thoughts as may render me blind to thy goodneſs, and unworthy of thy protection!

Oh, Lucy! I have been forced to lay down my pen, and ſeek, what I thank heaven I have not ſought in vain,, ſome immediate relief from the indulgence of tears, and continued fervency of prayer—my boſom is lighter than it was, and my ſpirits are more compoſed. I am glad I followed your advice (which you gave me kind as it was, with reluctance) in remaining here; for I am ſo deplorably weak in body, and ſtill more ſo in mind, that I ſhould have proved a ſ

a ſad burthen to you and the dear little feeling Frances, who has ſhewn for me a ſolicitude ſo uncommon, and ſo peculiarly affecting, at her tender age. Indeed I am hardly fit to converſe with any human being except our incomparable Audley, who, ſince I wrote the firſt part of this letter, has talked to me for a conſiderable time, and with an art that belongs to himſelf, has been indulgently trying to turn even my weakneſſes to my advantage. "Pray conſider, ſaid this invaluable friend, pray conſider, my dear dejected Cornelia, if you find it ſo difficult to bear the ſeverity of a wiſe and merciful God, how could you have ſupported ſuch agony of heart as in your ſituation there was a great chance of your having inflicted upon you by the common barbarity of man? Suppoſe our dear miſguided Seymour, whom the indulgence of Heaven has taken to itſelf, ſuppoſe he had purſued the uſual courſe of young men; ſuppoſe he had brought a miſtreſs or a wife to this country, and in the cruel pride of mortified affection had inſulted you with an oſtentation of felicity; ſuch events are by no means rare in human life. I have ſeen ſome women ſupport ſuch a teſt of their fortitude, but not under circumſtances ſo peculiarly painful. You ſtill imagine, my generous Cornelia, as you ſaid, I remember, on the day when I imparted to you our moſt afflicting loſs, that, if you could but reſtore him to life with all the happy luſtre of his enlightened mind, you would chearfully ſubmit to the anguiſh of ſeeing him united to another. Ah! my gentle friend, this idea is but the tranſient illuſive heroiſm of ſudden and immoderate grief, which, like all the vehement

paſſions, gives a brief energy to our ſentiments that nature is unable to ſuſtain. Truſt me, I know you better than you know yourſelf; and I am convinced, by many remarks which I have occaſionally made on your very tender and acute feelings, that, if the ſuppoſed event had happened, you would have loſt either your life or your ſenſes; and our beloved friend, inſtead of being, as he now is, a triumphant angel in Heaven, would have been tortured himſelf by theſe barbarous effects of his precipitate and vindictive love." "O, my good Audley! I replied, by ſhewing me how weak I am on every ſide, you will lead me, I hope, to the Almighty Source of all ſtrength; you will teach me how to acquire, what I grievouſly want, a more cordial obedience, and a more fervent and faithful devotion to God. How criminal muſt I be if I fail to acquire this, when my beloved Seymour has ſet me ſuch a bleſſed example of reſignation! But I ſhall acquire it by degrees. The divine ſpirit which breathes in every line of the precious letter addreſſed to me by the dear expiring convert, now begins to ſooth and to reanimate my heart, as I know that moſt affectionate of human beings intended it ſhould do. You ſaw, my dear Lucy, how dreadfully weak I was in receiving it; how, inſtead of conſoling me, it convulſed my whole frame. But this dear, this invaluable letter begins to operate as the ſofteſt balm to my wounded ſpirits. I read it conſtantly at ſtated periods of every day, and then lay it on my heart, after the example of poor Caroline; this excellent creature has hardly ſuffered leſs than myſelf, on the loſs of her generous protector, though our feelings are ſo different.

different. She almoſt made me ſmile juſt now, by a little circumſtance that marked her attachment to him; and to relieve you a little, my dear friend, from the mournful gloom of what I have written, I muſt attempt to relate it to you. As I paſſed the parlour door, where the Monſons happened to be with a friend who had called here to ſee them, I heard the voice of Caroline very loud, and with a tone of indignation very foreign to her nature. I clearly diſtinguiſhed the words—"No! good as ſhe is, I ſhall hate her if ſhe ever loves another man as long as ſhe exiſts!" As ſoon as I ſaw Caroline alone, I queſtioned her concerning the expreſſion which I had accidentally overheard; and, with her native frankneſs, ſhe declared it related to me, and had been drawn from her by a very fooliſh and ill-timed jeſt of their viſitor on the probable duration of my grief. You will eaſily believe that my heart was pleaſed with her vindication of its truth. I can indeed ſay, with the honeſt Caroline, that I ſhould hate myſelf were it poſſible for me to let Seymour have any ſucceſſor in my affection.——No! my dear Lucy, on that point I know myſelf, and fear not. The dear dying prophet himſelf has told me, that I ſhall continue to love him; and every movement of my heart and ſoul impreſs upon me the conviction that his prophecy is true.

I have only to implore the Great Searcher of all hearts, to temper and correct the affliction now ariſing from this love; and ſo to blend it with my love for my children, that theſe ardent affections, no longer oppoſite, but religiouſly united, may form all together the ruling paſſion of my life. This, my dear friend, is

my hope, my belief, my prayer, concerning all the future days that Heaven may allot to me upon earth. Your excellent brother comforts me by an aſſurance that time will ſo far reſtore my ſhattered nerves, as to give me the power of being every thing that I wiſh to be to my dear boys. Ah! what feeling ſpirits they will have! I am both afflicted and delighted by the ſenſibility with which my dear William continues to ſhew us his remembrance of that beloved object whom even ſportive infancy cannot forget. God bleſs the ſweet innocent! he has aſked me a thouſand diſtreſſing queſtions ſince you left us, which I can neither bear to anſwer nor to forbid. I have referred the dear affectionate little enquirer to your brother Edmund, for whoſe arrival we are all panting, whom I both long and dread to ſee. I muſt have much converſation with him, though I feel it will make me much worſe than I am at preſent, yet finally I hope better. Would to Heaven we could ſee Giuliana at the ſame time! but this I muſt not expect. Farewell, my dear friend. Did you think the weak creature you left, could have written you ſo long a letter? But my ſtrength has ſeemed to encreaſe with the idea that you would eſtimate my regard for you by my exertions to converſe with you in this bitter ſeaſon of my debility and diſtreſs——Heaven bleſs you and your dear little companion!—Do not fail to pray for

Your weak, dejected,
and affectionate
CORNELIA.

LETTER

LETTER XXXVIII.

FROM LUCY TO MR. AUDLEY.

AT length, my dear brother, the long and mournful expected veſſel, freighted with death and with affliction, is arrived. The dear remains of our hapleſs enchanting friend are ſafe on his native ſhore; and our beloved Edmund, who looks I think more than half dead himſelf, though he aſſures me his health is much better than it was, has deſired me to inform you of his arrival. He is himſelf engaged in ſettling the neceſſary arrangements for the funeral; and I muſt tell you, that we are both as much pleaſed as we can be at ſuch a time by the very flattering marks of attention, eſteem, and reſpect, which Edmund has found here, on his landing, from the relation of our loſt friend. Every precaution has been taken to render my brother's mournful office as little troubleſome as poſſible. All things have been kept in readineſs here, to conduct the funeral proceſſion from hence in any manner that Edmund may direct; and the liberal heir of our dear Seymour is waiting at his ſeat to receive my brother, who had announced to him his intention of attending the remains of the dear deceaſed to the vault of the family at Seymour Park. Edmund finds that, without

driving indecently faſt, he can reach the ſpot in two days and a half, by croſſing the country; and as he thinks a ſcene of this ſolemn nature may make a uſeful impreſſion on a young mind, he has determined to take little Frances and me with him in one of the mourning-coaches. The fourth ſeat in this carriage is to be occupied by a perſon whoſe preſence at this juncture affords me more pleaſure than I thought myſelf capable of receiving. And now, my dear Charles, can you tell whom I mean? No, I think you cannot! Our beloved Seymour ſeems to retain, even in his coffin, the enchanting power of ſurpriſing and delighting thoſe who love him by new inſtances of tenderneſs and munificence. This unexpected and welcome perſon is the old and venerable Danvers, who has a heart ſo overflowing with grief and gratitude, that he is to me at this ſeaſon one of the moſt intereſting companions that I could poſſibly have met with, eſpecially as the occaſion of his joining our party does ſo much honour to the heart of the dear friend we lament. As ſoon as our beloved Seymour found there was a probability of his death, he wrote to his couſin, whom he has ever treated as a friend, and who, as he really wanted no increaſe of fortune, is, I believe, ſincerely ſorry to gain it by ſuch a loſs. Among a few private requeſts which our Seymour made to his nameſake in caſe of his early death, was the following, "that whenever the old and infirm incumbent ſhould drop, the living which belonged to the proprietor of Seymour Park ſhould be given to Danvers." It ſo happened that this aged miniſter died very lately at Bath, while the

preſent

preſent Mr. Seymour was reſiding there, who immediately wrote to Danvers, to acquaint him, with his couſin's intention in his favour. As Danvers, though old, is full of activity and gratitude, he went to return his perſonal thanks for a letter which filled him both with joy and anxiety, as it mentioned the illneſs of his diſtant and conſiderate patron. He was actually converſing with Mr. Seymour in the moment when that gentleman received Edmund's letter, announcing the death of our dear generous friend. Judge, my dear Charles, what the good warm-hearted old man's ſenſations muſt have been at that time: he ſays the death of one of his own children did not affect him more; and in truth I believe him. Before he quitted Bath, he entreated permiſſion that he might wait to receive the body at Dover, eſcort it to the grave, and preach a funeral ſermon on the occaſion. It ſeems the good old man has a little tincture of profeſſional vanity; and in this particular and now almoſt neglected office of a Divine he has long taken a very pardonable pride; but he is this moment come in, not only to cut ſhort the little ſketch I was about to give you of his character, but to tell me I muſt inſtantly prepare for our mournful proceſſion.—God bleſs you all! I can only ſay to our dear Cornelia and Harriot, that I conſider this letter addreſſed to them as well as to you. I entreat you all to ſuppoſe that I have ſaid every thing kind to you for myſelf, Edmund, and Frances. Once more, God bleſs you all! I will certainly write again from Seymour Park, if the affecting ceremony I am to go through

does

does not overwhelm and ſuſpend all the poor faculties of

Your very faithful

and affectionate

LUCY.

LETTER XXXIX.

FROM LUCY TO CORNELIA.

OUR diſtreſſing duties are done. The dear remains of that enchanting friend, who ſtill holds his empire over the affections of us all, have been depoſited, with the moſt aweful ſolemnity and univerſal ſorrow, by the ſide of his departed parents. O! my very dear Cornelia, though once I confeſs I wiſhed to have you with me, I am truly glad that we oppoſed your ſtrong deſire to be preſent at a ſcene which I am now convinced by my own experience you would have been utterly unable to ſupport. I, you know, have ten times your preſent bodily ſtrength; and my feelings for the dear deceaſed are certainly not ſo exquiſitely painful as yours; yet,

yet, I proteſt to you, the ſadneſs of the ſpectacle was too much for me, and it was with the utmoſt difficulty that I continued during the whole ceremony in the church.——All the numerous dependants and rural neighbours of our univerſally idolized Seymour were aſſembled; the face of genuine ſorrow was ſo multiplied, that wherever I turned my eyes ſome viſage ſtruck me which reflected back upon me with new force the powerful anguiſh of my own heart. There were many infirm perſons in the congregation, who owed their ſubſiſtence to the bounty of the dead. Never ſurely was any man ſo young diſtinguiſhed by charity ſo extenſive and conſiderate. The good Danvers did noble juſtice to his virtues, and without varniſhing his foibles. This worthy preacher has in truth the rare talent in which, as I told my brother Charles in my laſt letter, he has long indulged a very innocent pride. In our journey hither, he ſpent more than half of each night that we paſſed on the road in compoſing alterations and additions to his occaſional ſermon; and I queſtion, my dear Cornelia, if your favourite Maſſillon himſelf ever made an audience weep more by a funeral diſcourſe: moſt aſſuredly he never delivered one that came more immediately from the heart. This excellent old man was indeed ſo thoroughly affected himſelf, that at laſt his feelings became too ſtrong for his powers, and this very circumſtance increaſed not a little the pathetic effects of his eloquence. As he drew towards the end of his diſcourſe, while all were weeping or ſobbing around him, he caught the infection ſo ſtrongly, that his voice began to fail—he pauſed—he wept—he attempted to proceed

ceed—his utterance was imperfect—he paused again, and gave vent to his tears—he tried again to conclude—he could not articulate more than half a sentence.—he hid his face—but after the pause of a few minutes he closed his book with an air of religious triumph, and said aloud. 'O! my friends and brethren, you 'want not more words from my faultering voice! '—The virtues of the dead are speaking more 'forcibly in your hearts; let me only request 'you to remember that the most grateful honour 'which any of us can pay to the spirit of a 'good man made perfect is to imitate to the 'utmost of our ability his benevolence and 'goodness. May the gracious God, who has 'called our departed example to his heavenly 'reward, give us grace and power to persist in 'that purer and more perfect tribute to his memory; so that all of us who are now mourning for our generous friend and benefactor, 'by being fond and faithful copies of his Christian merit upon earth, may finally be his associates in the beatitude which this merit has 'secured to him in Heaven!'

So ended our venerable preacher, whose white locks and affecting simplicity endeared him to all his audience. Pressed as I am for time (for the post is on the point of departure), I could not help sending my dear Cornelia the close of a discourse, to which I know her pure and full heart will so devoutly add an Amen. As there is a chance that you may see us in a few hours after the arrival of this letter, I will only add, that from the amiable new master of this noble mansion we have received every soothing civility.

ty. He is, you know, a widower; and his only daughter is about the age of Frances, a circumſtance that has proved of great uſe to me in managing our dear little feeling child. Edmund has ſtill ſome buſineſs to adjuſt with our obliging hoſt; but he tells me it will all be finiſhed early to-morrow. We are equally impatient to fly as faſt at poſſible to the dear mourners at Audley-Grove, and indulge with them at leiſure in all the quiet luxury of grief.—Accept our united love to all; and believe me ever

Your affectionate

LUCY.

Advertiſement by the Editor.

*** It may be proper to inform the reader in this place, that the ſubſequent letters were written above fifteen years after the preceding; it is not however neceſſary to detain him by a relation of any events which happened in that interval, as the important ones are mentioned in the two letters which immediately follow.

LETTER XLVIII.

FROM MRS. MORETON TO CORNELIA.

MY DEAR MADAM,

IF the name of Moreton is a ſtranger to you, which I am vain enough to think it is not, may I ſtill

I ſtill flatter myſelf that you have a perfect and friendly remembrance of a perſon whom you once called "the pretty madcap of Ireland?" —Mercy on us! what long years have rolled away, and what cruel events have happened, ſince you beſtowed that flattering affectionate appellation on the pert and flippant Louiſa at Audley-Grove! Alas, dear Audley-Grove! Ah! my dear Madam, what a loſs have we there! —how bitter is it to me in my return to England, after paſſing twelve terrible and trying years in the Eaſt, to miſs relations ſo dear, the moſt benevolent and moſt engaging friends of my youth! I had the conſolation of hearing from my mother, that my beloved aunt Harriot died (according to a wiſh that we have both heard her expreſs) very ſoon after her incomparable huſband, and that ſhe conſigned to you, my dear Madam, (the long and juſtly valued friend of her boſom!) the care of her dear little Lucy, that ſweet child, who uſed to divert us ſo much by the petty caprices of infantine ſenſibility. How I long to ſee what a lovely girl ſhe is become under a guardian, or rather a ſecond mother, ſo tender and accompliſhed! But is ſhe at preſent under your roof? and may I have the happineſs of finding you both together if I can contrive to reach Sedley-Hall? I am now, they tell me, not above forty miles from you, at the ſeat of Colonel Moreton's father. We have been only five days on ſhore: After paying our duty to the aged parents of my huſband, he has kindly promiſed that we ſhall proceed to viſit my poor infirm mother in Ireland. We are to make London in our way; and it will add not a little to my delight if you will allow me admiſſion

admiſſion at Sedley-Hall, at the end of our firſt day's journey from hence.—I long to preſent to you my noble Colonel and two playful little Eaſtern monkies that make a part of our train. I muſt certainly bluſh as much as a ſallow Aſiatic ſkin will allow me to bluſh, in preſenting to you my ſecond huſband, if you ever read, as doubtleſs you have, the panegyric that I ſent to Audley-Grove on my firſt.—Poor Major Maſſey was in truth a glorious character; and I was preparing to return, as you probably heard, to lament him in Europe, when my generous Colonel, who thought it wrong that ſuch a little ſhatter-brained woman ſhould wander ſo far to find comforters, took on himſelf the kind office of ſoothing my ſorrow, and tempted me to relinquiſh my immediate paſſage to England, for which I had actually engaged.—Now, my ſage Cornelia, you muſt not think the worſe of your Iriſh madcap for this ſpeedy iteration of nuptials, to uſe a ſaucy phraſe of my favourite Congreve; for, to tell you a truth, of which you ſerious ladies in the cool ſalubrious climate of England may not be perfectly aware, a poor European female, who is got into the burning buſtle of the Eaſt, has no time to indulge herſelf in the ſlow decencies of ſentiment. She muſt ſcramble as well as ſhe can in a ſcene where intereſt rages through all ranks like an epidemical diſeaſe, and where Death is ſo rapid in his viſits that his uſual harbinger Grief has hardly an opportunity of appearing in his ſuite. You ſee, after all my troubles and adventures, I am returned as great a rattle as I went.——Alas! my pertneſs is the only article in which you will not find me moſt diſmally altered. As

to

to beauty, of which your partiality once gave me credit for more than I ever poſſeſſed, I have not a particle remaining; the horrid ſuns of India have burnt it all to aſhes; ſo pray, my good friend, be thoroughly prepared to ſee the once roſy, light, and capering, Louiſa metamorphoſed into a ſallow, heavy, and waddling goſſip, in complexion ſomewhat like a withered leaf, where green and yellow are contending for pre-eminence; in perſon, not very unlike a certain little fat and groteſque Chineſe animal, that uſed to divert the children at Audley-grove. —I can now laugh at myſelf, you find, as I uſed in thoſe days to laugh at every body elſe, not ſparing even our beloved and admirable Cornelia. You know, my dear Madam, that I always piqued myſelf on not having a ſpark of envy in my compoſition; and I am now going to prove to you my perfect exemption from that baſe foible, which the men very impudently and iniquitouſly preſume to be moſt prevalent in our ſex. It is ſurely proved that I have it not, when, after telling you how ſadly I am altered myſelf, I expreſs the ſincereſt pleaſure in the very different repreſentation that I have received of you.—I have juſt been told by ſome viſitors here, who have the honour of your acquaintance, that your health is perfectly recovered from thoſe ſevere ſhocks which it ſuſtained from the moſt cruel afflictions at an early period of life; that you are handſomer than ever; and, to uſe the words of a gentleman who ſpoke of you with a ſpirit for which I was almoſt ready to embrace him, that you enjoy a tranquil happineſs and dignity of character very rarely attained by mortals of either ſex. Your ſweet

boys,

boys, they ſay, are grown two moſt promiſing and delightful young men.—Believe me, my heart exults to find that Providence has rewarded you for all you endured from your tender attachment to that dear, faſcinating, and cruelly loſt friend of ours, whoſe name I will not allow myſelf to write, as I could not write it without a tear, and I wiſh to ſalute you in this epiſtle as chearfully as I can.—The account I hear of you has indeed made me happy, but at the ſame time it has made me almoſt wild to hear and ſee more. Pray take compaſſion on my affectionate impatience; and as we muſt not move from hence under three weeks at leaſt, have the goodneſs to write me a letter of comfortable length. I have a million of queſtions to aſk, yet will not allow myſelf at preſent to aſk one: remember, however, I beſeech you, that while I was in India all the intelligence I gained of my European friends was miſerably imperfect—many, many letters were loſt that I wrote, and that I ſhould have received. I have ſome reaſon to believe that no letter of mine ever reached your hand, though I really wrote to you at three different times, and once ſent you a little Oriental preſent, but of no great value, which went, alas! with an unfortunate friend, who promiſed me to deliver it into your own hand, to the bottom of the ſea. But of all theſe matters when we meet. At preſent, I will only add, that my dear Colonel is almoſt as eager to be preſented to you as I am to fly into the arms of my incomparable friend, who is ſtill, I find, the admiration of all her acquaintance, and

who

who formerly uſed to look with endearing indulgence on all the idle flippancy of

Her affectionate

LOUISA.

LETTER XLIX.

FROM CORNELIA TO MRS. MORETON.

WELCOME, moſt cordially: let me again ſay, welcome, my dear Louiſa, to that country from which you have been abſent ſo long, and where ſome of thoſe friends are ſtill remaining whom you uſed to enchant with the ſweet pleaſantry of your ſportive youth. I have often grieved at not hearing from you, for all your three pacquets to me were loſt; and I have hardly felt a ſenſation ſo joyous, during the long interval ſince we parted, as I felt on the agreeable ſurpriſe of this charming letter which has told me you are returned. Yet my preſent joy is very ſingularly mingled (as all my joys have been) with regret. In rejoicing moſt heartily on your happy return, I cannot help lamenting that our dear Harriot has not lived to ſee a day which was ſo frequently the object of our hopes and our prayers. With the fond inconſiſtency of affection, I have almoſt wiſhed to call her back from Heaven, that ſhe might ſhare with me in the delight of receiving our long loſt Louiſa, whom her warm heart never ceaſed to love as a child of her own. Ah, Louiſa, I have indeed been ſingularly familiar with affliction

tion ſince we bade each other farewell at our beloved Audley-Grove. Never did any mortal loſe two more valuable friends than I loſt in the late dear poſſeſſors of that lovely ſpot. But I have learnt to be very grateful to Heaven, for having lent them to me ſo long, and at a ſeaſon when I had ſuch bitter occaſion for all the balm of their friendſhip, inſtead of murmuring at the heavy loſs I have ſuſtained in their deceaſe. I had the melancholy ſatisfaction of attending them both in their laſt hours; and muſt tell you that they both died, as they had lived, models of tenderneſs and fortitude. I ought certainly to grieve the leſs, from our dear Harriot's having left me (to uſe her own lively expreſſion) her corrected and embelliſhed ſelf in her daughter, who, as the dear ingenuous parent truly ſaid, has all her good qualities, without her particular foible, if that indeed ought to be reckoned a foible which rendered her ſo very dear to us all; I mean, a little exceſs of ſpirit, and eagerneſs in projects that ſhe loved to form for the advantage of her friends. Her milder and blooming Lucy is now, I think——but poſitively I will not tell you, as I was going to do, what ſhe is; you ſhall ſee, and judge for yourſelf. I will only ſay, ſhe is as impatient to embrace you as I am; and, in truth, my dear Louiſa, except my two boys, or rather young men, as I believe it is high time for us to call them, there is no traveller in the world whoſe arrival under my roof can delight me ſo much as yours. I muſt, however, beg your indulgence in one point, and deſire you to let me receive you, with your noble and happy Colonel, the dear Eaſtern little creatures, and all your train,

train, not at Sedley-hall, but in St. James's Square. The truth is, I have promiſed my ſons, who are now returning from Italy, to be waiting for them in London the week after this. You, I am ſure, will readily pardon a mother for not breaking ſuch an appointment. As my ſons are ſo unfaſhionable as to ſay they ſet a high value on their mother's ſociety, and as they are certainly to me the moſt intereſting companions in the world; I have lately taken into my own hands again our great London houſe, and hope to play the chearful houſe-keeper to them both till one of them ſhall deſert me for a wife; a kind of deſertion that I ſhall be more ſolicitous to encourage than prevent. Come then, my dear Louiſa, to a houſe where you know there is plenty of room for us all, and where, believe me, your preſence will add not a little to the gaiety and happineſs of the domeſtic circle. To ſhew you how very free I intend to be with you, and that I do not ſtand in awe even of your military lord, I ſhall begin to ſcold you on paper for your abominable flattery. Surely, my dear, you muſt have brought home with you all the Eaſtern arts of adulation, ſince you can addreſs ſuch fine flouriſhing perſonal compliments to a ſimple, quiet, motherly woman, not far from forty, who has been for ſome years ſo perfectly emancipated from all the perſonal vanities of her ſex, that ſhe lives only in her children. Ah, Louiſa, my former and more ſelfiſh life was a ſad troubled ſcene, as you know but too well. Heaven grant that my new life (in which ſelf has truly as little to do as poſſible) may be more tranquil and more fortunate! It will be hard upon me indeed if, after being al-

moſt

moſt a martyr myſelf to a calamitous paſſion, I am deſtined to ſee my children ſuffer from any hapleſs affection. I have endeavoured to guard againſt this evil by every precaution in my power. I have done every thing that I could do to render myſelf a pleaſing companion and a boſom friend to my ſons. Alas! how weak and fruitleſs are ſuch expedients againſt all the perils of paſſion! Ah, my friend, the dear youths are juſt arrived at that ſtormy ſeaſon. Can I think of ſcenes that you and I ſo well remember, and not tremble for them? O Louiſa, I have an additional circumſtance to quicken my anxiety. I did not mean to communicate to you in this letter what I now feel an irreſiſtible impulſe to impart to you. You know what an eager benevolent projector our dear Harriot was on the wide and dangerous ſea of affection, in bequeathing to me the care of her ſweet Lucy; it was the fond hope of her friendly and maternal heart, that the dear girl's reſiding with me might ultimately make her the wife of my eldeſt ſon. The connexion would delight me as much as it could have delighted my dear departed friend; but, alas! how chimerical and how perilous in general are ſuch diſtant parental projects! I ſaid all that diſcretion could urge againſt her idea; but you know the affectionate vehemence of our dear Harriot; and your quick ſpirit will conceive in a moment how full of hopes and fears, of a thouſand delicate and diſtreſſing perplexities, my preſent ſituation muſt be. Your chearful and benevolent ſpirit ſeems reſtored to me by Heaven, to give me new animation at this critical period. My ſons have been abſent from me almoſt two years; but I have great

reaſon

reaſon to be pleaſed with their conduct and their improvements in that time. They are returning to make their firſt appearance in the world. William will be of age in leſs than two months, and a ſeat is prepared for him in parliament, where I have ſet my heart on his proving what his independent father, and a certain perſon who loved him alſo with paternal affection, often propheſied that he would prove; I mean, a manly and ingenuous character, equally diſtinguiſhed by talents and integrity. I think you will ſmile, my dear and ſtill ſportive Louiſa, when you ſee how far maternal love has made a politician and a patriot of me, in the ſimple and good ſenſe of thoſe hacknied words. But of this and a million of other matters when we meet. Come, and call me old Polonius in petticoats if you pleaſe, provided you will but aſſiſt me in promoting the happineſs of the dear young Ophelia. Deuce take this ill-omened alluſion, which has in it an air of propriety in one ſenſe that wounds me; for, between ourſelves, I am already convinced that the dear girl loves the young prince more than the young prince appears to love her. God forbid he ſhould ever drive her to diſtraction! If he does, he deſtroys us both. O Louiſa, a charge ſo delicate preſſes upon my mind and heart with a formidable weight. Haſten, therefore, I conjure you, and give, with your benevolent vivacity, new energy to the ſpirits of

Your faithful and affectionate

CORNELIA.

P. S. Your couſin Lucy joins me in a very earneſt requeſt, that you will delay your expedition to Ireland, and return with us from London

don, to celebrate my ſon William's birth-day at Sedley-Hall. We are ſure your good mother, however impatient to ſee you, will indulge us with the privilege of detaining you on this occaſion, as it will give you an opportunity, which you may not otherwiſe find, of meeting ſome friends who love you very much, particularly your old ſwain Edmund and Lucy the Elder. They are both ſtill ſingle, and as amiable as ever, though poor Edmund has been lately teized with frequent fits of the gout. Pray remember, if you do not write by the firſt poſt, to direct to St. James's Square; and pray alſo remember that you are to proceed immediately to that quarter whenever you arrive in town. The firſt thing that I ſhall do there will be to order the beſt apartments in the houſe to be inſtantly prepared for our dear Eaſtern magnificient and yet laughter-loving Princeſs Louiſa.

LETTER L.

FROM MRS. MORETON TO CORNELIA.

"I'LL meet thee at Phillippii"——

Aye, and I will put to flight this ugly phantom that haunts the imagination of my dear

Cornelia, famous as ſhe is (like Brutus himſelf) both for gentleneſs and fortitude. But, in plain Engliſh, my very dear Friend, let me return you a thouſand thanks for your moſt affectionate letter; and, above all, for the dear communication of a ſecret ſo precious; it delights, it enchants me. Bleſs the memory of my charming aunt Harriot! She was indeed an affectionate projector. But though ſhe failed in one of her darling ſchemes, her projects were generally ſucceſsful. This her poſthumous project, as I may call it, has quite ſet me on fire with zeal to aſſiſt in its completion. Courage, my excellent friend, thou moſt delightful of guardians and mothers. What ſhould we fear? Cannot you and I (adroit and experienced as we are in affairs of Love) cannot we eaſily manage the pliant hearts of an ingenuous youth of twenty-one and a ſweet ſimple blooming girl of eighteen. I warrant you: truſt me, my dear, they ſhall be a pair of amorous obedient puppets in our hands. We will ſo pull and direct the wire of their ductile paſſions, that they ſhall repreſent for our pleaſure the moſt intereſting drama in the world. We know indeed that, in the common puppet-ſhows of Love and Matrimony, the Devil plays a very buſy and tyrannical part; but in ours he ſhall not exhibit even a nail's breadth of his cloven foot. No my dear, it ſhall be all virtue, harmony, and delight. Well, I am returned at a happy juncture indeed, to aſſiſt in preparing the machinery for ſuch an entertainment. But, my good Cornelia, when we have taught this lovely young couple to be deeply and furiouſly enamoured of each other, you muſt not come forth with a common matronly

maxim

maxim, "that early wedlock is imprudent, that miſſes ſhould wait till they are twenty-five," &c. &c. Poſitively I will have nothing to do with any ſcheme of keeping two lovers in a flaming purgatory for I know not how many years. For my part, I think of marriage as Macbeth talks of murder:

"If it were well when it is done, 'twere well
It were done quickly *."

A good match, in my *not humble* opinion, can hardly be celebrated too ſoon. The objection moſt univerſally urged againſt early marriage deſerves, I think, no conſideration at all. The people who fear that their children may tread too cloſely on their heels do not deſerve the bleſſing of a child; and had better not marry till they can eſcape all probability of ſuch an incumbrance You ſee, my dear friend, I have brought home again my old romantic ſpirit. All the heats of India could not draw it out of me. But you and I ſhall hardly differ on this article; and, if we do, we ſhall have time enough to adjuſt our reſpective opinions in amicable debate. At preſent I ſcribble in extreme haſte, to ſalute you with my thanks and ardent good wiſhes before you ſet forth for the great city. A good journey to you, and a moſt happy meeting with the dear travellers, whom you muſt expect with the moſt affectionate impatience. Poor Ireland muſt forgive me if I am more ſlow than I ought to be in paying my filial duty there. My ſin ſhall be

* Note by the Editor.
Louiſa has here quoted Shakeſpeare very inaccurately; but her inaccuracy gives at leaſt a clear meaning to a paſſage quaint and obſcure.

thrown on your ſhoulders; and Heaven knows you have merit enough to counterbalance the ſins of half your acquaintance; yet to me you are a wicked tempter, and I confeſs myſelf unable to reſiſt the lure that you have thrown out to detain me in England.

My Colonel deſires me to ſay a great many fine things for him; but I anſwer, "Not one;" for he will not ſleep under your London roof; though he ſays he will pay his perſonal devoirs to you very ſoon, and very aſſiduouſly. Theſe men are proud creatures, my dear, and they muſt have their way. My commander, "take him for all in all," is one of the beſt, I believe, of theſe lordly beings. I will venture to ſay you will not diſlike him; and be aſſured you will ſee enough of

Your very grateful

and affectionate

LOUISA

Tell the dear Lucy I am ſo eager to ſee her, that I dream of nothing elſe.

LETTER

LETTER LI.

FROM CORNELIA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

London.

DISTANT as I am from you, I can turn to you only for counſel in a moſt cruel ſurprize and conſternation that almoſt robs me of my ſenſes. On my arrival here, I find an anonymous letter left for me at this houſe; of which I incloſe you a copy. For Heaven's ſake, tell me what I ought to think of it. I am diſtracted with a thouſand contradictory ideas. Is it only a barbarous trick to torment me? Yet whom can I have provoked to ſuch inhumanity of malice? Is it an artifice to gain money? Alas! I am ready enough to relieve the indigent without forcing them into fraud. Is it, finally, a calamitous truth, that muſt render my latter days more wretched than my early life? GOD in his mercy forbid! Surely, if ſuch peril exiſted, the ſenſible, honeſt, and vigilant Monſon muſt have perceived it, and would have given ſome notice of it before this time either to me or to you. I am quite bewildered in the maze of

my own thorny conjectures. Pray give me your inſtant advice. Yet, before I can receive it, I ſhall probably venture on a ſtep for which I ſhould have been glad of your ſanction. I feel ſuſpence ſo torturing in a point where the laſting happineſs of my child is deeply concerned, that I would rather face the moſt formidable creature exiſting than not to try to put an end to ſuch ſuſpence. I muſt ſee and converſe with this terrible Unknown. The moment I gain any farther light, you ſhall hear again from

Your infinitely diſtreſſed,

but ever affectionate,

CORNELIA.

P. S. Love to Lucy and Frances. I ſhould have had infinite delight in telling you and them that Louiſa is returned from India, and will meet you all on William's birth-day, had not this cruel blow rendered me at preſent inſenſible to joy.

LETTER

LETTER LII.

ANONYMOUS TO CORNELIA.

MADAM,

THOUGH I muſt confeſs that ſelf-intereſt, or rather paſſion, is the prime motive to this letter, in which I muſt ſurprize and give you pain, yet be aſſured I mean well to you, and we may prove very uſeful friends to each other; though for various reaſons, you muſt excuſe my adding a name to this unexpected epiſtle.

Let me aſſure you, however, that I am a gentleman, and ſubject, I own, to many of the diſtreſſing follies too often found in that character. My preſent diſtreſs is of ſuch a kind, as you I am ſure, if you are the amiable and indulgent and generous parent that I have heard you repreſented, will be moſt ready to pity. It is diſtreſs of heart, ariſing from a paſſion certainly not wiſe in its exceſs, and, I muſt own, not the moſt honourable in its purpoſe; yet, under a paſſion ſo circumſtanced, I am bold enough to hope and to ſolicit your aſſiſtance, even while I regard you as a paragon of virtue, becauſe in aſſiſting me, you may probably preſerve your eldeſt ſon, who is above all praiſe of mine, from

the imminent hazard of wretchedneſs and diſhonour.

Be not too much alarmed, my good lady; and let me conjure you, by all that is dear to us both, to treaſure up in your own breaſt the very important ſecret which I am going to confide to your honour and your diſcretion. If you make any imprudent, any ungenerous, any unguarded uſe of it, we are both ruined; for, unconnected and different beings as we are, this momentous ſecret, my dear Madam, involves the happineſs or miſery both of your life and mine. Perhaps if you will condeſcend to let the writer of an anonymous letter have a private conference with you, and will give him your word of honour, not to betray your knowledge either of him or his deſigns; perhaps in this caſe I may converſe with you on a topic ſo painfully intereſting to us both, for I have a thouſand things to ſay that I cannot crowd into a letter. But let this be as we may find expedient hereafter. My preſent buſineſs muſt be to give you as clear an idea as I can upon paper of certain circumſtances, which threaten much anguiſh to your maternal heart, and have already given tortures of a very different nature to mine.

In explaining this myſtery, I had better, I think, ſay too much than too little. Perhaps, Madam, as you have lived, I underſtand, a moſt virtuous, happy, and retired life, perhaps you know not even the name of a moſt celebrated fair creature, who, though confeſſedly not a model of virtue, is univerſally reckoned the moſt bewitching object that was ever followed by licentious idolatry. The perſon I mean is the famous

famous Emily Belmont: ſhe is the daughter of a deceaſed Britiſh general by a Venetian actreſs; and inherits, not all the opulence, but all the ſpirit, and all the captivating qualities of both her parents. After being the miſtreſs of three peers and two commoners, and after rejecting offers of marriage from an elderly duke and a young viſcount, Emily went laſt year to Rome with lord T——. In Italy, for our mutual inquietude, I fell in love with her; and ſhe fell in love with your eldeſt ſon. As Emily piques herſelf on a peculiar frankneſs of ſpirit, ſhe told me very honeſtly, that ſhe had given her whole heart to Sedley. "To Sedley (ſhe ſaid in a tone that expreſſed the moſt paſſionate fondneſs) to Sedley, more beautiful than all the boaſted marble Gods and heroes in this country; and, alas, half as cold!"—So far her generoſity told me, to effect my cure. But ſhe did not tell me what I had the addreſs, or, I ſhould rather ſay, the good luck to diſcover, by a certain female friend of hers; I mean, that her love to Sedley was utterly unlike all the attachments that ſhe had hitherto formed. She is ſeriouſly in love, and for the firſt time in her life. It is the great ambition of her heart and ſoul to make herſelf the wife of your ſon. She is now purſuing this point with ſuch a mixture of cordial ſincerity and refined artifice, as thoſe only can thoroughly conceive who have had opportunities of ſtudying her very ſingular and faſcinating character. I have kept the keen eyes of jealouſy upon all her movements, and am fortunately apprized of all her private machinations. She has animated the marble whoſe coldneſs made her ſigh; ſhe has wound

Madam, to condeſcend ſo far as to have a ſecret interview with a female in a rank of life ſo different from your own. But on this point, I perſuade myſelf, your pure and noble heart will not heſitate for the preſervation of your child.

Emily notwithſtanding her frailties, is in truth a creature of ſentiment and ſoul. In her heart and underſtanding, even you, Madam, will find much to admire; for I may juſtly ſay (ſetting aſide the fond prejudice of a lover) that ſhe has every female virtue except chaſtity. I cannot give you a more forcible idea of her character, than by telling you what is literally true, that ſhe quitted a certain earl, who loved her paſſionately, for no other reaſon but to reſtore the injured health of his ſiſter, a lady of tender ſpirits, and of a ſcrupulous conſcience, who made herſelf ſeriouſly unhappy from her brother's illicit attachment. I happened to learn all the particulars of Emily's very ſingular and generous conduct on this occaſion; and they ſuggeſted to me the firſt idea of the plan that I am now recommending. I know that this accompliſhed, though frail beauty, has a noble mind, that abhors the idea of proving a ſource of inquietude to any amiable family. I alſo know, my dear Madam, that ſhe has a very great and tender veneration for your character; and I will tell you how ſhe acquired it, by being indulged in the privilege of reading your letters to your ſon, which I have heard her commend as the moſt exquiſite letters that ever flowed from a parental pen; and in points of literature, ſhe is allowed to poſſeſs great diſcernment and delicacy of taſte.

Now,

up the paſſions of her young Adonis, by granting him many indulgences that could excite, and not one that could abate, the fervency of deſire. She has produced in him what all her exquiſite talents and attractions have been exerted to produce, a ſentimental delirium. In ſhort, my dear Madam, affairs have been thus ſettled between them. The fair penitent, expreſſing a graceful horror for her former illicit life, has deſerted Lord T——, and is already in London. Your ſon, who cannot, I think, be here under a fortnight, has promiſed that he will not attempt to ſee her till he has ſettled all his concerns at the important period of his being of age, which I underſtand is very near; and in the following week they are to be privately married.

Now, my dear Madam, I am confident that you are as eager as I am to counteract with your whole heart and ſpirit this alarming deſign. But how to do ſo is the grand queſtion. For Heaven's ſake, do not truſt to your maternal influence. You are indeed as ſincerely beloved by your ſon as a mother can be; but what are the entreaties or the commands of a parent to a young man whoſe more imperious love has been ſo artfully excited? Truſt me, ſuch commands are but chains of flax, that are inſtantly burnt aſunder in the flames of oppoſed deſire. I ſpeak from fatal experience. Pardon me if I ſpeak too ſtrongly; but what is to be done? I have long cracked my brains to find the moſt effectual expedient, and to ſave you at the ſame time from all painful explanations, and all diſſention with your ſon. I think I have found this expedient, if I can perſuade you,

Madam,

Now, my dear Madam, ſituated as you are, and poſſeſſing, as I have heard, the moſt inſinuating ſweetneſs of manners; what influence may not you hope to gain over the feeling and generous Emily, if you will condeſcend to converſe with her on the great object of our terror! You muſt not, however, betray me, however tempted you may be to do ſo. This would effectually ruin our hopes. But you may ſay, that certain hints have been given you by the tutor of your ſon; that maternal anxiety made you reſolve to obtain an interview with a perſon whom you have heard very ſingularly commended, both for generoſity and truth. Emily is indeed a model of both; and I queſtion if any mortal exiſts in either ſex that has a more magnanimous diſdain of uttering a lie. If you can but contrive to ſee her in private, of this you may be ſure, that although ſhe may not perhaps think it prudent or juſt to your ſon to acknowledge to you the whole truth, yet ſhe will not attempt to deceive you by any abſolute falſehood. As I underſtand, Madam, that you are very opulent, I could wiſh you to make a forcible impreſſion on the heart of Emily, by a liberal unexpected offer of promoting her independence. What ſum might be ſufficient for this purpoſe I cannot preciſely ſay; but I fancy it might be done upon terms very eaſy to you. I know ſhe has a private revenue, not inconſiderable, though not equal to her wiſhes, becauſe I have heard her ſay, that if ſhe poſſeſſed an independent income to a certain amount ſhe would ſettle herſelf for life at a favourite ſpot on the Continent.

Perhaps

Perhaps your maternal tenderneſs and generoſity may incline you to give her the power of gratifying this deſire, as the nobleſt means of obtaining from her the great ſacrifice of her very dangerous attachment to your ſon; yet, ſuppoſing you are willing to do ſo, I have ſtill ſome doubts whether it may be poſſible even for you to prevail on the high-ſpirited Emily to accept your bounty. This I perfectly know, ſhe would not accept ſuch a gratuity from any *man* breathing. Perhaps to a lady of your admirable character her very ſingular and honeſt pride may feel itſelf more indulged than mortified in being materially indebted. In this article I am really unable to judge how ſhe may act; but you will have a ſtill more effectual expedient for preventing the dreaded marriage by ſhewing her, with mild maternal eloquence, the miſery it muſt produce, not ſo much from her rank in life (for there I know your generoſity will ſpare her) but from the no leſs material inequality of age; for Emily is at leaſt nine years older than the youth ſhe loves; but, alas, at thirty ſhe is a thouſand times more faſcinating than all the younger damſels in the univerſe.

At length, my dear Madam (pray let our mutual hopes and fears excuſe the familiarity of my addreſs), at length I have ſaid to you all that I think it neceſſary to ſay in a letter, for the prolixity of which I ſhould apologiſe, if that prolixity had not been occaſioned by my earneſt deſire to gratify the natural curioſity of the amiable parent whom I have been obliged to alarm for the honour and happineſs of her child. Pray conſider what I have ſaid with your beſt judgment, but without conſulting too many friends; and

and have the goodneſs to let me know what ſteps you think it moſt prudent to take at this very alarming and critical time. I encloſe, on ſeparate ſlips of paper, a direction to the houſe near Portman-Square which Emily has juſt taken, and a fictitious name by which you may direct to me at the St. James's Coffee-houſe.

I will earneſtly implore the favour of at leaſt a line from you within theſe two days, for the time you know is preſſing; and you will have the goodneſs to remember, that although my terrors on this occaſion are very different from thoſe of a mother, they are not leſs tormenting. Heaven guide you, my dear Madam! Reſt aſſured that I moſt ſincerely wiſh to be as uſeful a friend to you, in this perplexing affair, as you can deſire any mortal to be, and eſpecially,

UN INCONNU.

LETTER LIII.

CORNELIA TO THE UNKNOWN.

SIR,

IF you are (as I muſt ſuppoſe from your letter) a gentleman who really wiſhes well to the unhappy

happy mother whom you have both terrified and obliged, I muſt entreat the favour of a perſonal conference with you in St. James's-Square, at eleven to-morrow morning. You will ſee only myſelf and a very old female friend of mine. Believe me, you may depend on the ſecrecy of both. Indeed the ſubject of our conference is of a nature too painful to be lightly and indiſcreetly communicated to any perſon from whom you could wiſh it to be concealed by,

SIR,

Your faithful, afflicted,

humble ſervant

CORNELIA SEDLEY.

LETTER LIV.

FROM CORNELIA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

BEFORE I can receive your anſwer to my laſt diſtracted letter, I think myſelf bound to give

give you the ſatisfaction of knowing that I am a little relieved from my extreme perturbation, though not, alas! from my chief terror, by the ſudden and unexpected arrival of the dear animating Louiſa. This warm-hearted friend has left her noble Colonel with his aged father; and being as impatient to ſee my boys as I am, ſhe has kindly flown with her uſual vivacity to wait with me here, to welcome their return. She could not have arrived at a more ſeaſonable moment; the ſight of her has afforded me inexpreſſible comfort. I have opened my full heart to her, which gave me the more eaſe, as I had carefully concealed the horrid contents of the diſtreſſing anonymous letter from my dear little tender Lucy. It would have coſt her many pangs of the heart, not leſs bitter than thoſe I endure; and it ſhall be the conſtant ſtudy of my life to ſecure this ſweet girl as much as poſſible from pain, if I cannot eſtabliſh her happineſs in the manner I would wiſh.

By Louiſa's advice, I have juſt diſpatched a billet to my anonymous correſpondent; and, having ſuch a ſecond in my lively friend, I have ventured to invite this terrific Unknown to a private conference in my own houſe. I hope I have not done wrong; but I ſhall be content to wander a little from the ſtrait line of propriety and decorum, if I can but preſerve this dear impaſſioned boy. Oh, Seymour! thy prophecy in this point is but too true! This beloved youth has all the perilous ſenſibility that embittered the early days of his mother. Gracious God teach me how to ſave him from this horrible impending miſchief, without alienating from me his filial affection!

Farewell,

Farewell, dear friends! for I ſpeak to all; and all, I know, will feel kindly anxious for the reſtoration of my peace. I long for your opinion of the diſtreſſing letter. I think, when I have ſeen and talked with the writer, I muſt feel a little more at eaſe. Heaven knows I am far otherwiſe at preſent! Adieu! You ſhall very ſoon hear again from

Your troubled, affectionate

CORNELIA.

LETTER LV.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO CORNELIA.

MODERATE, I beſeech you, my very dear friend, the fond exceſs of your maternal apprehenſions. Though I muſt confeſs you have puzzled your privy counſellor, ſtill I maintain that you ought not to harraſs your tender ſpirit, by giving way to the worſt ſuggeſtions of your affectionate terror. Surely we have time enough before us to prevent any ſerious miſchief from this impending danger, whatever it may be. After repeated peruſals of the alarming letter, I am utterly unable to form a ſettled opinion

opinion whether this threatened danger is real or fictitious; but I ſtrongly incline to believe the latter. There have been ſo many accompliſhed and ingenious perſonages ruined of late by diſſipation, and reduced to prey upon unwary opulence by the dexterity of their devices, that fraud, like many of the nobler arts, has been cultivated and refined among us to a ſurprizing degree. From many anecdotes which I have lately heard of this kind, I am led to ſuſpect that your anonymous letter forms a part of a ſubtly-fabricated project, to draw a conſiderable ſum of money from the unguarded purſe of a mother, whoſe opulence is well known, and whoſe tenderneſs and generoſity cannot have eſcaped the notice of any keen neceſſitous adventurer, who might wiſh to draw from them, by fradulent ingenuity, an immediate ſupply for his diſtreſs. You may reckon me perhaps a too timid and ſuſpicious recluſe, when I propheſy that your terrific Unknown and his boaſted Emily will turn our two profligate worthleſs characters, not utterly unlike our old acquaintance Don Raphael and Camilla in Gil Blas. It ſtrikes me as a capital ſtroke of pecuniary contrivance in a neceſſitous courtezan, to practiſe on the liberal fondneſs of a mother, by pretending to ſacrifice a perilous paſſion for her ſon. I give Emily (however handſome or plain ſhe may be) great credit for this idea; but I muſt give you alſo one caution, my very dear and generous friend. If you really feel diſpoſed in this buſineſs (as I know you can afford it) to throw away a conſiderable ſum, rather than enter into a painful perhaps, and rather indelicate explanation with your ſon, I entreat your let the money

money be paid in Paris, and to the formidable lady in perſon. This point your friendly banker will readily manage for you with great eaſe; and I think, if you generouſly incur any ſuch expence, you ought to be rewarded by the moſt perfect aſſurance that the fair object of your alarm is ſafely out of the kingdom. I have lived ſo ſequeſtered a life for ſome years, that I know almoſt as little of this celebrated Emily as you can do. I am indeed acquainted with her name, and I know a channel by which I can ſpeedily obtain the fulleſt information in reſpect to her real character. For this I will immediately apply, and have it diſpatched to you with the utmoſt ſecrecy and expedition. You judge very generouſly and very juſtly of Monſon: he mentioned once, but very ſlightly, this alarming fair-one in a letter to me; but his apprehenſion ſubſided, and if any ſort of connexion exiſts between the parties (which I do not believe), it has completely eluded his vigilance: this circumſtance itſelf is highly improbable; and the more I ponder on the whole affair, the more I am perſuaded the all-accompliſhed Emily will be found only *a delicate Impoſtor*. Whatever ſhe may prove, I foreſee that you will be tempted both to ſee and converſe with her. What mother with ſuch feelings as yours would not feel curious to ſee a fair creature, who deſperately loves, or deſperately pretends to love, a ſon ſo idolized by herſelf? Well, my dear friend, you are certainly a privileged character, and I ſee no miſchief that can enſue from your indulging ſuch a deſire, except perhaps the trifling miſchief of your being tempted by the nobleneſs of your nature to throw away more money than

the

the object may deſerve. But if the hapleſs fair creature ſtrikes your fancy, and intereſts your feelings, you may ſurely indulge yourſelf in the charitable pleaſure of putting a few looſe hundred pounds in her pocket, and ſend of the beautiful jade to the Continent. I am perſuaded my young friend William will be too happy in his return to you, to grieve very long for the abſence of ſuch a lady; and I am ſtill more perſuaded that he is much too wiſe to have ever ſeriouſly thought of marrying a courtezan who is almoſt twice as old as himſelf.

That I may reply to you as rapidly as poſſible, I will only add our united love, and our cordial prayers, that you may be thoroughly repaid for your preſent cruel inquietude, and for every paſt ſuffering, by ſeeing the dear object of our general anxiety as happily married as we all wiſh him to be. Lucy the elder gives a deep ſigh for her dear young nameſake on this occaſion. But I repeat, my excellent Cornelia, you and my ſiſter are frightened too much. I need not tell you with what eagerneſs we ſhall expect a farther account. Farewell! and believe me ever,

Your faithful

EDMUND.

LETTER

LETTER LVI.

From the Unknown to CORNELIA.

MY DEAR MADAM,

I AM highly flattered and pleaſed, and yet, I own, a little diſtreſſed by your obliging appointment. Forgive me if I requeſt your word of honour before I make my appearance, that if you happen to recollect my features (for I muſt confeſs you have ſeen them formerly), you will never communicate either my follies or my zeal to ſerve you (which are ſtrangely blended, as Vice and Virtue too frequently appear) to any of my relations.

Do but favour me with this aſſurance by the bearer, who waits for your reply; and you ſhall inſtantly behold

Your devoted

INCONNU.

LETTER

LETTER LVII.

From CORNELIA to the Unknown.

SIR,

YOUR billet has conſiderably encreaſed my very eager ſolicitude to ſee you. I do not heſitate to give you, in the moſt unequivocal manner, the promiſe you require. Whatever confidence you may think proper to place in me, I will venture to ſay that you ſhall have nothing to apprehend from the treachery or indiſcretion of

Your obliged

and faithful ſervant,

CORNELIA SEDLEY.

LETTER

LETTER LVIII.

From CORNELIA to EDMUND AUDLEY.

COMFORT! comfort! my very dear, though too timid and too courageous friend. In one, and, alas! the great important point, you confide too much in the diſcretion of the dear enſnared youth; but, in regard to other perſons and circumſtances, your ſuſpicions and your fears have outrun the truth.—No! my dear cautious counſellor, the terrific Unknown is not a *Don Raphael*, I can aſſure you. He bears indeed a greater reſemblance to poor Gil Blas himſelf, though I muſt not allow you to ſuppoſe for a moment that Emily is *a ſecond Camilla*: ſhe is believe me, in my eſtimation, a very different and intereſting character; though I ſhall not be ſurprized if, when you arrive at the end of this letter, you think me a ſimpleton and a dupe, and incline to the very opinion concerning Emily which I tell you I would not have you entertain.

I have ſo much to tell you, and am ſo flurried between joy for what has paſſed, and apprehenſion of what may ſtill happen, that I hardly know how to begin relating you to the many things that I wiſh to you hear. Firſt, for my *Unknown*, I am bound, as you will ſee, by the two enclоſed

encloſed billets which paſſed between us, and which I ſend you as an apology for my reſerve; I am bound, I ſay, not to tell you who he is. But have a little patience, my very dear and affectionately curious friends! by to-morrow's poſt a certain perſon, without any treachery, will impart to you this teazing ſecret, which (though I hope the ſage Edmund will bear the inquietude it may give him like a man) our dear and truly feminine Lucy the elder will be dying to know. Let me juſt ſay for her relief, that this alarming Unknown is a perſon for whoſe welfare and reputation I am intereſted in no trifling degree.—Nay, I abſolutely love him, and certainly not the leſs for finding him inflamed with a vehement paſſion for the ſame dangerous and enchanting object who has captivated my ſon.—My new friend, as you will naturally ſuppoſe, is as eager as I can wiſh him to be in his zeal to aſſiſt me in the preſervation of my child. The great wiſh of my ſoul is, to preſerve them both. If I can accompliſh this, I ſhall think myſelf bleſt indeed! I am more ſanguine than uſual in my hopes upon the ſubject, becauſe Providence ſeems inclined to befriend me, by having conducted ſome little incidents in ſuch a manner as to ſurprize and ſupport me with unexpected comfort, and I may ſay delight. All this riddle will be explained to you to-morrow; at preſent I muſt only talk to you of the alarming, the dangerous, the attractive, the faſcinating, and, let me add with gratitude, the admirable Emily. You have a good gueſs, my dear Edmund, at the ſecret feelings of a fond mother. I confeſs to you, I felt a great longing to ſee this too intereſting

perſonage.

perſonage. I have ſeen her; and what will you think of me when I alſo confeſs, that I am almoſt as much in love with her as my poor artleſs William, or my more experienced ———? Fie on my ſlippery pen! it had nearly written the name of my not-to-be-named *Unknown*: but I was ſpeaking of this faſcinating creature, who puts all diſcretion to flight in both ſexes. Never did I behold any female who would be ſo likely, if I were a man myſelf, to make me the abſolute ſlave of her attractions. Inſtead of that inſolent or alluring vivacity of feature which often marks her condition, the face of Emily has all the exquiſite modeſt ſweetneſs and ſimplicity that a painter would wiſh to repreſent in a new-created Eve. The charms of her converſation are ſtill more captivating than thoſe of her countenance!—You will not wonder that I thought them ſo, when I tell you, ſhe perfectly convinced me that her paſſion for my ſon is no fictitious, no artificial, no ſelf-intereſted paſſion. Believe me (and experience, alas! has made me too good a judge in this particular) it is genuine, ardent, and miſerable love; the love of a woman, unfortunate indeed in her condition, but exquiſite in underſtanding as in beauty! Fully ſenſible of her own infelicity and diſgrace, yet noble enough to be ready to ſacrifice her fond ambition, which ſhe wants not perhaps the power of indulging, to the real happineſs and honour of the youth ſhe loves!—Oh! generous Emily, thou haſt my pity, my affection. Now, my dear Edmund, do not laugh at me; do not ridicule that *cullibility of heart*, which, to uſe your own abominable phraſe, you have ſometimes told me, makes a part of my charac-

ter; do not think me an egregious fool, when I tell you what I have done—aſſuredly I have not paid too high a price for the ſatisfaction that I at preſent enjoy. You remember the advice given me by the friendly Unknown concerning a pecuniary offer to Emily. As many circumſtances, upon the truth of which I could rely, had fully convinced me that this unfortunate fair-one has a very generous heart; I determined that my offer ſhould be ſo conſiderable, as to make a forcible impreſſion on her feeling ſpirits —The large ſum which, you know, I have ſaved for the pleaſure of preſenting it to my two boys, when each ſhall become his own maſter, ſupplied me moſt conveniently on this occaſion: I felt no ſcruple in making free with this money, becauſe I knew that, if I even expended all which I deſigned to give Charles, that dear generous boy would one day tell me that I could not have employed his property more to his delight, than by making it conducive to the preſervation of his brother. Animated by theſe ideas, I went well prepared to be liberal to Emily: after a very long converſation, which coſt us both many tears, and in the cloſe of which ſhe moſt gracefully acquieſced in the plan, which I wiſhed her to follow, of retiring to the Continent; I preſented to her a ſet of notes payable to herſelf in Paris, for ten thouſand pound. Her reply to me was this, "O! my dear Madam, how you delight and torture me in the ſame moment!" -It is indeed a triumph for the wretched Emily to have engaged the tender regard of ſuch a pure and exalted being as you are: but what would my felicity have been, if my deſtiny had ſaved me from perdition,

perdition, and made me ſuch a daughter as you might have received without a bluſh? Abject as I now feel myſelf in your preſence, allow me, my dear Madam, to imitate in ſome degree the nobleneſs of your mind: of the ſum which you ſo generouſly offer, I will accept only as much as may be ſufficient to relieve your parental inquietude, by convincing you that the object of your fear is as far removed from this country as you juſtly wiſh her to be—let me but flatter myſelf that I carry with me your eſteem, and you ſhall find me a voluntary exile. Here a little generous conteſt aroſe between us, which was at laſt amicably ſettled by my inſiſting on her taking five of the ten thouſand; and this ſhe would only conſent to do, on my promiſing to receive it again, whenever opulence, which her ſuperlative beauty may indeed command, ſhall enable her conveniently to replace the ſum that I forced upon her.

Shall I own to you the whole extent of my weakneſs? Shall I tell you that I not only wiſh to make this beautiful frail-one independent, but I wiſhed alſo to make her virtuous and devout? Here, alas! I have no chance of being gratified: this lovely infidel, who is as far from being a hypocrite as ſhe is from being a ſaint, unveiled to me her inmoſt ſoul. The fatal philoſophy of France, in which ſhe has been trained, has ſo alienated her mind from all ideas of true Religion, that I could not hope to influence her conduct by any arguments that I might draw from thence.—Happily, however, for the great object of my immediate anxiety, I found her moſt tremblingly alive to all the motives of honour, ſentiment and affection. I am con-

vinced that her love for my ſon is genuine, by the manner in which ſhe conſented to ſacrifice her own gratification to his advantage. Though I was prepoſſeſſed in her favour, by the impaſſioned report of *The Unknown*; I was yet greatly ſurpriſed to find a perſon, who had plunged for ſome years in a life of ſuch ſplendid infamy, ſtill poſſeſſed of feelings ſo viſibly acute, ſo delicate, and refined. As to her age, my anonymous friend muſt ſurely be miſtaken: I cannot believe that ſhe is more than four years older than William: ſhe has at leaſt youth enough to make all the mother tremble in my heart. When I think of my poor fond and fiery William's attachment, alas! what has this dear ſimple ardent youth to ſuffer, even on the beſt poſſible regulation of this unfortunate affair! I ſhould not love him ſo intenſely as I do, had he been of a nature not framed to feel agony in the loſs of an idol ſo attractive. I ſhudder, not only at the thoughts of the anguiſh which I know his poor guileleſs deluded heart muſt feel from diſappointed paſſion, but ſtill more from a dread of loſing his filial affection. Though my ſon has great tenderneſs in his nature; yet he has alſo a great portion of that uncontroulable imperious ſpirit which belongs to moſt of your lordly creatures. If in the delirium of his early love, he believes his paſſion to be under the guidance of virtue, he will not only diſobey, but he will even hate me, ſhould he diſcover that I have ſecretly laboured to prevent its indulgence——O! merciful God! let me not become, I beſeech thee, an object of abhorrence to my child—the very idea convulſes my whole frame. Alas! this Emily is ſo ſingularly captivating, and her own paſſion

paſſion is ſo vehement, that I even doubt her own power of keeping the promiſe which I am confident ſhe made to me with cordial ſincerity. What have I not cauſe to apprehend from two beings ſo unhappily under the dominion of a blind and fatal paſſions, when even I myſelf, while ; was converſing with this faſcinating Emily, felt a ſtrange ſucceſſion of vehement and even oppoſite emotions! There were minutes, during our long conference, in which I was almoſt tempted to fold her to my boſom with pity and admiration; amd there was an inſtant in which my brain ſeemed to be on fire with momentary madneſs and horror. From an expreſſion that ſhe dropt, a ſudden idea darted acroſs my mind, that it was juſt ſuch a frail enticing ſorcereſs that occaſioned the untimely death death of my ever idolized Seymour.—— All my admiration, all my pity, all my humanity, were gone; and I darted upon the poor ſuppliant creature a look of terror and deteſtation, which ſeemed for a minute as ſhe afterwards ſaid, to annihilate her exiſtence. Tears relieved her from the icy and wretched ſtupefaction which the ſudden (and to her not perfectly accountable) change in my countenance produced upon her. In ſeeing her weep, I began to weep myſelf, and ſo by degrees was ſoftened into a compaſſionate human creature again. But oh, my good old friend! whoſe experience has given them more reaſon than I have, to dread the fierce tyranny of the paſſions in a young ardent frame, ſo inexpreſſibly dear dear to me as my ſon? oh, thou dear and never to be forgotten victim of a ſimilar delirium! oh, my beloved Seymour! if thy purified ſpirit has any know-

ledge of the perils that now ſurround thy ſtill fond and faithful Cornelia, ſave, if thou canſt, the lovely youth, whoſe promiſing infancy was ſo dear to thee; ſave him! entangled as he is, ſave the ſon of thy Cornelia, from thoſe fatal ſnares which hurried thee to thy early grave!

Alas! my dear Edmund, though I began this long letter with ſome degree of calmneſs and even gaiety, I have now thrown my poor agitated boſom into painful perturbation, by indulging perhaps too much the apprehenſions that haunt me. I ought certainly to reflect with conſiderable ſatisfaction, and great thankfulneſs to Heaven, on the unexpected comfort and hope that I have been enabled to derive from the ſurprizing incident which you are to hear to morrow. I ought alſo to comfort myſelf not a little, with the very ſtrong aſſurances which I received from the generous Emily, that ſhe will quit England directly, and go by the way of Brighthelmſtone and Dieppe to Paris, to avoid the great chance of meeting my ſon at Dover or Calais, in which caſe ſhe ingenuouſly confeſſed to me, that ſhe could not confide in the reſolution ſhe had formed, or the promiſe ſhe had given.—— This frankneſs, I muſt own, (for frankneſs you know is a favourite quality with me), encreaſed my good opinion of her ſincerity. Whatever may happen you may depend on receiving immediate intelligence. I have juſt heard that my dear boys will moſt probably arrive in a day or two. I call them ſtill boys; and almoſt wiſh, alas! that they were ſtill in their leading ſtrings Alas! that unlucky word reminds me, that when they were ſo, I was far from being either tranquil or happy.—Am I ever to be ſo?—Heaven only

only knows—and let me truſt in Heaven.—As ſoon as they arrive, I ſhall hurry them down to Sedley-Hall. Pray, my dear friend, contrive to come to us there as ſoon as you can; for, believe me, your preſence will be an inexpreſſible comfort to the terrified and trembling parental ſpirit of

Your affectionate

CORNELIA.

LETTER LIX.

FROM LOUISA MORETON TO LUCY AUDLEY THE ELDER.

AND ſo, my dear agreeable old friend, you are really a confirmed and contented ſpinſter, as they tell me.—Well! Providence, who regulates our various deſtiny, ordains, I am perſuaded, what is beſt for us all.—Never was mortal in a better mood for ſaying fine grateful things of this ſaid grand and inviſible Governeſs, Providence, than I at this minute; for,

behold! here am I, your old rattling madcap, formerly called Louiſa Mount-Maurice, a moſt ſtriking and happy example of the care that Providence often takes in directing thoſe who are unable to direct themſelves.—And what does all this mean?—Patience, my dear—I am the very perſon deſtined to tell you the ſecret that you are dying to know.—What you! Louiſa, you! who have been twelve years out of our world, are you come, like a conjurer, to find out this *terrific Unknown?*—Patience again my dear; I muſt have the pleaſure of telling my own delightful little ſecret in my own way.—Well! but do not fret, dear Lucy; I will not be ſo cruel as I uſed to be, and tantalize you for half an hour before I impart what you are ſo eager to hear. Come, let us be grave, and all ſober ſerious attention on both ſides.—Well then, you have already heard how this terrible Unknown was appointed. Our dear orderly Cornelia was waiting in high order to receive him in her dreſſing-room; but it happened that, when he rapt at the door, the flattern Louiſa was up in her chamber, where I was detained, for I know not how many minutes, by your ſweet engaging nameſake.——Well, my dear, be as impatient as you pleaſe, to hear of the Unknown—I poſitively will not ſay a word of him, till I have ſaid that this dear niece of yours is one of the very loveliеſt girls that I ever beheld, and then ſo enchantingly like her dear loſt mother, my incomparable aunt! Well, I muſt not ſpeak of the poor departed Harriot a preſent, nor let a ſingle tear ſtain this letter, that I wiſh to be all joy. To proceed then in my joyous ſtory: As ſoon as I could

could ſhake off the ſweet inſinuating Lucy, whoſe tender curioſity made her a little reſtleſs at not being permitted to ſhare with me the privilege of ſeeing this important ſtranger, I haſtened to appear at the private conference, where our dear trembling Cornelia had told me ſhe ſhould depend ſo much upon me as her ſecond. Though not very ſubject to fear, it was with ſome trepidation that I opened the door of her dreſſing room. But judge my aſtoniſhment and my tranſport! when this terrific Unknown, who had his back towards me as I entered, turned ſuddenly round, and with equal aſtoniſhment diſcovered himſelf to be—my eldeſt brother—aye, verily! the gay, honeſt, impudent Archibald Mount-Maurice himſelf.—Surely Heaven ſuggeſted to me my ſcheme, which appeared at firſt only one of my wild romantic vagaries; I mean, the ſcheme of leaving my dear Colonel and his eldeſt boy with his good old father, and of flying hither to paſs a little time with Cornelia, for the ſake of aſſiſting her in a certain parental project that ſhe has kindly imparted to me. By my arrival here, I have had the delight of being very uſeful to her. I ſhall ſhare with her, I truſt, the bleſſed office of ſaving her ſon, and I hope alſo of reclaiming my leſs endangered but improvident brother.—He had no idea of my being in England; though from an apprehenſion that Cornelia might ſhew his letters to ſome perſon acquainted with his hand, he had taken the precaution of employing a ſecretary even in his two little billets. He is, I fancy, too much engaged by other ladies, to be very minutely inquiſitive

concerning the movements of his ſiſter.—I muſt, however, ſay for him, that he could not well have heard of my arrival, as we came in a Portugueeze veſſel to Liſbon; and our return was not notified in the public papers, like the arrival of paſſengers in our India ſhips. Poor Archibald was both delighted and confounded by the unexpected ſight of a perſon ſo likely to lecture him ſeverely on the preſent occaſion.—But affection triumphed over fear. The rogue loves me in his heart, which is in truth as warm and as well-meaning a heart as was ever over-heated in the fiery furnace of Love. And now, my dear Lucy, as affectionate projects are in faſhion among us, I will tell you an affectionate project of mine; but be upon your guard: you muſt not at preſent, for your life you muſt not ſay a word of it to the diſcreet and cautious Edmund. I want to make this honeſt idle brother of mine walk as unhurt in the ſaid fiery furnace, with me like a good angel by his ſide, as you remember the three men with hard names did in no metaphorical furnace, according to a book that I ſhould not lightly quote under the roof of our dear devout Cornelia. But, to ſpeak in plain Engliſh, I have conceived a moſt eager deſire to make a match for Archibald with a certain niece of yours, named Frances, who is, they tell me, not only a ſweet character, as I would ſuppoſe a diſciple of yours muſt be, but marvelloufly like the lovely woman whom my brother had the misfortune to loſe, when ſhe was juſt going to make him happy, by a fondly expected ſon and heir, who ſhared the untimely fate of

of his beautiful and lamented mother. I am perſuaded that between ſerious advice and ſarcaſtic raillery, I ſhall effectually cure Archibald of his licentuous deſires; and, if I ſucceed, he will, you know, be what is commonly called a very good match for almoſt any girl in the kingdom. He has a good paternal eſtate; but the idle rogue, for want of a good young woman to take care of him, has contracted ſome fooliſh debts, and ſhould not in diſcretion marry without a fortune of ſeven or eight thouſand pounds. Pray tell me between ourſelves, if you think your ſweet Frances may have a ſum like this on her marriage. If my idea pleaſes you, as I confeſs it does me, I am perſuaded we ſhall be able to manage ſo deſirable an event; for it is a maxim with me, that a little confederacy of two or three ſenſible women may guide and fix the paſſion of an honeſt warm-hearted man on any fair object they chuſe. Bold doctrine this! yet, believe me, I have ſeen it frequently verified, and hope to do ſo at preſent in more inſtances than one; I am juſt called away from my paper; but will contrive, if I can, to ſcribble a little more to you before I ſeal up this pacquet for the poſt. —Adieu for ſome hours!

Joy! joy! rejoice with us my good friends all! Here are our two young demigods juſt alighted among us; all the diſtreſſing apprehenſions of our dear and truly parental Cornelia are drowned for the preſent in the fulneſs of her delight. Well indeed may ſhe be proud of ſuch ſons, and anxious for their felicity. What a heavenly pair! the twin-brothers of the beautiful Helen could not be more gracefully engaging. For my part, I am glad I am a ſafe ſallow-

faced

faced old-woman. Mercy on the hapleſs damſel, whatever her condition may be, whoſe deſtiny condemns her to love one of theſe godlike creatures, without meeting an adequate return! But, above all, may Heaven avert ſuch a calamity from our little, lovely, modeſt, and ſenſible Lucy! ſhe muſt be the wife of the manly heroic William. What a ſingular expreſſion of ſweetneſs and dignity this enchanting youth has in his countenance! yet, handſome and gentle as he appears, he looks to me as if he could be very impetuous, very ſtrong-minded, in his love. His features give me the idea of Achilles, while Charles, though like him, is yet ſo different, that, from his ſerious and contemplative air, I could almoſt take him for a Platonic philoſopher. But I ſuppoſe our young ſage will ſoon prove himſelf an impaſſioned mortal; and as for our young Achilles, I almoſt tremble to think how deſperately he may rage, when he finds that his haughty Briſeis is torn from him. But courage, my dear! have we not the ſweet ſoothing Lucy, to mollify and humanize the outrageouſly indignant hero? Courage! I ſay again —— I am determined to hope that every thing will end happily, though our preſent ſituation, Heaven knows, affords but too much room for inquietude and anxiety. I meant to have requeſted the favor of a long letter from you while I remain in town; but I now ſay, do not write but come to us as ſoon as you can in the country, for the dear diſcreet mother has reſolved that we ſhall paſs but one day more in this dangerous city. The morning after to-morrow we are to ſet forth all together for Sedley-Hall; and I have happily prevailed on my half-reformed brother

to

to join our party, which affords infinite ſatisfaction to Cornelia, as ſhe hopes by his aſſiſtance to gain a greater inſight into William's amorous ſecrets than ſhe could probably obtain by any other channel. She has determined (and there is, I think, as much wiſdom as delicacy in her determination) to abſtain, if poſſible, from all converſation with her ſon on the *perilous ſubject*. Heaven bleſs this incomparable parent, and make her as happy as ſhe deſerves to be! This is an honeſt little prayer, in which I am ſure, my dear Lucy, you will moſt cordially join

Your very ſincere and affectionate

LOUISA MORETON.

P. S. I have been delighted in hearing from Cornelia, that the perſon we uſed to talk of ſo inceſſantly, the admirable Giuliana, had the addreſs to turn her old father, the Italian merchant, into an Engliſh gentleman; and that, after burying his old bones in this land of liberty and good ſenſe, ſhe is happily ſettled in your neighbourhood. I am charmed with the proſpect of ſoon ſeeing this intereſting perſonage. Don't you remember my ſaying, in my madcap-days, that I could willingly walk an hundred miles for a ſight of her?—Ah, Lucy! my legs cannot move as they uſed to do in thoſe days; but my ſpirits, thank Heaven! have their old or rather young nimble motion and affectionate alacrity, as I hope very ſoon to convince you in perſon. Farewell!

LETTER

LETTER LX.

FROM CORNELIA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

Sedley-Hall.

My very kind and conſiderate old Friend.

I THANK and love you as I ought to do, for ſending me two ſuch comfortable and animating gueſts as your ſiſter and Giuliana ſo ſoon after my return. Think me not ungrateful or unreaſonable, if I add, that even with theſe dear friends and comforters around me I feel a painful anxiety and impatience for your arrival.—Indeed I want a perſon of your experience and authority to direct me in all my conduct on this very bitter emergency. I have learnt from the apparently frank and friendly Mount Maurice, in whom I am half-willing and half-afraid to confide, though his excellent ſiſter aſſures me he is a very truſty confidant; I have learnt that Emily has written to my ſon. Her letter is a very tender and eternal adieu: alas! I ſee but too plainly the exceſs of poor William's paſſion, in his change of countenance and behaviour ſince this

this letter arrived. His ſufferings pierce me to the ſoul. I try to ſooth him in vain; and I feel it very neceſſary to check myſelf in my endeavours to do ſo, leſt I ſhould betray what his offended paſſion would hardly forgive. I hope, however, that the charming little groupe of friends aſſembled here may gradually diſſipate his touching melancholy, eſpecially if we can detain him here; and, as his birth-day is now ſo nigh, he cannot form any decent pretence for leaving us before that feſtival arrives, for which we are already beginning to make chearful preparations. Alas! I make them with a very trembling heart. Should this dear and moſt unhappily enamoured youth make a precipitate and blind uſe of the privilege which the approaching important day will confer upon him, all my hopes will be blaſted, and I muſt be miſerable for ever.

You kindly aſſure me, that you and Frances will certainly be with us on the evening before this intereſting day. Muſt then ſuch a long and tedious fortnight paſs, before I can have the comfort of talking to you on the great ſubject that preſſes ſo heavily on my heart? Pray get rid, if poſſible, of your unſeaſonable gueſts; and be aſſured, that every additional day which you can beſtow upon me, before the period you have named for your arrival, will be a real benefit, as well as an inexpreſſible obligation, conferred on

Your moſt anxious

and affectionate

CORNELIA.

LETTER

LETTER LXI.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO HER BROTHER EDMUND.

INDEED, my dear brother, we want you here very much. Our poor Cornelia has juſt been ſurprized, and is almoſt diſtracted, by a very unexpected letter from this tormenting abominable Emily. There is nothing violent or inſulting in her letter; on the contrary, it is full of the moſt tender reſpect: but this bewitching creature has repaid all the money ſhe accepted, and ſeems to intimate, though ambiguouſly, that her motive for this reſtoration is a diſtant hope of aſpiring to that honour which, with a modeſt propriety, ſhe had once, you know, utterly renounced.

This intimation, ambiguous as it is, has put Cornelia on the rack: we are all puzzled to account for the contents of this alarming letter; and the more ſo, as we are certain that the poor enamoured William has not written to his miſtreſs ſince he received that epiſtle from her which threw him into a wild and wayward melancholy. In that point his pride triumphed over his affection: but this perilous affection is juſt blown afreſh into a blaze of joy, for he alſo has a letter from Emily, as we learn from Mount Maurice, with the contents of which he is viſibly

bly tranſported, though our capital ſpy has not yet been able to aſcertain theſe contents. But here is the good zealous ſiſter of that ſpy: here is Louiſa juſt come to tell me the whole myſtery, while her brother is imparting it to Cornelia. Emily, it ſeems, did actually ſet out for France; but ſhe was recalled, to receive a conſiderable legacy juſt fallen to her by the death of a peer, with whom ſhe once lived, and whom ſhe quitted (as you will remember we heard) from generous motives of tenderneſs to his ſiſter. Were this all, we ſhould perhaps have but little to fear; the worſt is yet to come. Fortune, in her caprice, ſeems reſolved to laviſh all her favours on this frail and miſchievous beauty. She has juſt received from a certain amorous prince on the Continent the moſt dazzling overtures—nothing leſs, I aſſure you, than the offer of a ſplendid eſtabliſhment for life, and a title of dutcheſs. This offer the bewitching Emily has encloſed to her beloved William, in the ardent hope that ſo ſtriking a ſacrifice of ambition may atone for all paſt deficiencies in point of chaſtity, and induce even his mother to think her not unworthy of his hand. The fond youth, as you may ſuppoſe, is almoſt frantic with joy and eagerneſs to embrace the fair, who prefers him to a prince. Mount Maurice told his ſiſter, "That from the impetuoſity of his young friend in their private converſation on this topic, he did not believe any power in the world would be ſufficient to prevent the marriage:" but the latter part of this information Mount Maurice has very prudently reſolved not to communicate to Cornelia till you arrive.—No words can tell you how ve-

ry

ry eagerly your ſpeedy preſence is prayed for by all the poor frightened cabinet-council here, and particularly by

Your affectionate Siſter.

LETTER LXII.

FROM CORNELIA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

OH! my dear friend, my laſt reſource! though your kind ſiſter tells me, ſhe has written you a moſt preſſing letter, and acquainted you with all my diſtreſs, I muſt ſend a few lines to you myſelf. Alas! my dear counſellor, I begin to fear that this impending evil (ſurely the moſt bitter that could have befallen me) is now becoming inevitable. My poor impaſſioned and impetuous William will be as deaf as the wind to any thing that I can dare to ſay to him. I ventured juſt now (being alone with him) to touch, though diſtantly and lightly, on the terrific ſubject. I ventured to expreſs a hope, that he would never marry without my concurrence. —He replied, "That, my deareſt mother, is more than I muſt promiſe even to you."—"Why ſo?"—"Becauſe, Madam, the prejudices

judices of Virtue are ſometimes as violent as thoſe of Love; and when they are ſo, believe me, they are more cruel and unjuſt." He ſaid this with an air at once ſo tender and imperious, that I could hardly help exclaiming with a burſting heart, "Alas! my child, thou art a ſecond Seymour!" Oh, Edmund! if he is deſtined to prove, like our loſt and ever lamented friend, the victim of precipitate paſſion, though in a different manner; what but extreme miſery in the various periods of my life can be the portion of

Your afflicted

and almoſt hopeleſs

CORNELIA!

For Heaven's ſake, haſten to us as faſt as poſſible.

LETTER LXIII.

FROM EDMUND AUDLEY TO CORNELIA.

MY VERY DEAR FRIEND,

IT grieves me to the ſoul that I cannot inſtantly appear upon a ſummons which my heart is ſo willing

willing to obey; but, alas! a moſt cruel, unſettled, and tormenting gout, is flying about me in ſuch a manner, that it is utterly impoſſible for me to quit my own houſe. All I can ſay at preſent is, that before this letter reaches you, my dear Frances (whatever I may ſuffer from the abſence of ſuch an invaluable attendant) ſhall be on her road to your houſe, and entruſted with that caſket of jewels which I had vainly propoſed to myſelf ſo much pleaſure from the hope of delivering in perſon. Truſt, however, I conjure you, my excellent friend, in Heaven, and the influence of your own pure angelic mind over your ſon, in a conference which you wiſely defer to the laſt moment. When you find him on the point of leaving home, you muſt be ſilent no longer; but open your whole over burthened heart to him, and exert all the tenderneſs and all the authority of a parent. If it is poſſible for me to be with you before that diſtreſſing explanation ſhould take place, you ſhall certainly ſee

Your very faithful and affectionate,

though very infirm

and much tormented,

EDMUND.

P. S. Pray tell my young friend, that as I ſend my daughter as my proxy to celebrate his birth-day, if my preſent malady renders me unable to follow her (and I fear it will), I ſhall depend on receiving very ſoon a charitable viſit from him: tell

tell him, I think both his gallantry and his gratitude will induce him to eſcort my ſiſter and Frances home again, when he conſiders how ſenſibly ſuch a poor invalid as I am muſt feel their abſence.

I flatter myſelf my dear Madam, that I might have ſome influence over his mind, if I were able to hold a long and private diſcourſe with him, and if I continue unable to move, you will, I hope, uſe your beſt endeavours to procure for me the opportunity that my bodily infirmities will not allow me to procure for myſelf. I might ſay much to him, that ſo gentle a mother could hardly ſay. Think of this; and I conjure you not to deſpair. Adieu!

LETTER LXIV.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO HER BROTHER EDMUND.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER,

I THOUGHT nothing could diſtreſs me more than your illneſs at this unfortunate time: but I believe I love your child ſtill better than yourſelf

yourſelf; and I have been terrified almoſt out of my ſenſes for our dear Frances. Be not however, alarmed; ſhe is ſafe, I thank Heaven, under my care, after a providental eſcape from a moſt alarming accident, which has added to the miſerable confuſion that now reigns, to my infinite ſorrow, in this troubled houſe. But our dear girl, I muſt repeat to you, is ſafe; and though ſhe has a ſevere gaſh in the upper part of her left arm, her health is not injured, and her lovely perſon not materially disfigured. The miſchief happened not more than three or four miles from this place. A coach full of holiday people, with drunken men and wild horſes, either accidental or with wanton malice, drove againſt your chaiſe, and overſet it. Moſt fortunately, the glaſs on the ſide of our dear Frances was down; but the violence of the ſhock threw her forcibly forward, cut her left arm with the front glaſs, and ſtunned her for ſome little time by beating her head againſt the door. Her thick hair very happily ſaved her from material injury; or we might have loſt, my dear Edmund, the chief ſupport and delight of your life and mine, by this horrible miſchance. Let us think of this eſcape, and be as thankful as we ought to be. The dear Frances behaves with her uſual ſenſe and ſpirit. Her wound has been dreſſed by the intelligent Brenſil, who aſſures us all, that we have not even the ſlighteſt ill conſequence to apprehend; the ſweet girl, however, is much troubled in her mind by a loſs for which ſhe is certainly not to blame, eſpecially as that loſs ſeems to have ariſen from her extreme care of the precious depoſit with which ſhe was entruſted. She had the little mahogany box containing

taining the caſket of jewels in her hand at the moment of the miſchance, and ſuppoſes that the ſhock, which ſtunned her, threw what ſhe held from her hand into the road. But the confuſion was too great for any thing to be known very clearly. Martha and Stephen confeſs, that they thought only of their bleeding young miſtreſs; and I believe, indeed, they would both have given all the jewels in the world, if they had been under their care, to have ſtaunched the blood of our idolized Frances. However the evil might happen, the caſket is loſt; the road has been ſearched in vain; and I think it proper to ſend off an expreſs to you with this painful intelligence, as I apprehend you may wiſh to ſend an account of the loſs to London, and perhaps to advertiſe ſome deſcription of the jewels, which nobody can do but yourſelf. I cannot ſay but I am bitterly grieved for the loſs of this caſket; but what, alas! are the moſt coſtly jewels but vain remembrancers of ſplendid miſery to perſons ſo ſick at heart as the dear unfortunate miſtreſs of this noble manſion is at this moment! Her affectionate and gentle ſpirit is bent indeed to the earth; though, with a ſweetneſs and generoſity peculiar to herſelf, ſhe labours to hide her own various afflictions, and exerts herſelf to the utmoſt to ſooth and conſole the immediate vexation of poor Frances.

I have delayed ſending this, although the man and horſe have been waiting for it ſome hours, to take the chance of a ſecond ſearch on the road; but this has been as vain as the former. During this interval, I had ſome private converſation with Cornelia, that has made me as wretched as herſelf. She has been apprized of

of

of all the danger from Emily; ſhe has had a ſecret conference with her ſon; it was very ſhort; and you will judge of her preſent anguiſh of mind from my only repeating to you the laſt words of that conference: "Reflect, my dear child; and tell me what your feelings will be if you find that the woman you have married is treated with contempt by all the world!"—"I can anſwer you, my dear Madam, moſt clearly: I ſhall feel proud that my own heart has more juſtice than all the world; and, believe me, I ſhall return its contempt ten-fold."—"I have done, thou dear unhappy youth: thou art under the influence of a fatal, though a generous delirium, from which I foreſee it will not be in my power to ſave thee. I have only to pray to God, which I do with my whole aching heart, that he will either take me from the earth, or allow me to mitigate in ſome future years that exceſs of miſery which I perceive thou art determined to draw upon thyſelf."

Alas! my dear Edmund, what a wretched morning is this, to make part of a day moſt eagerly expected and deſtined in our viſions (ſo cruelly deluſive!) to a general feſtivity of heart!

I have juſt left the dear long-ſuffering and now overwhelmed Cornelia reclining on her bed, with our angelic Giuliana by her ſide. She has one of theſe oppreſſive head-achs that ariſe from ſuch perturbation of heart and ſoul; but this incomparable mother is reſolved, if poſſible, to collect a little ſtrength from repoſe, and appear with tolerable ſerenity at this inauſpicious feaſt, from which ſhe has had ſome thoughts of withdrawing, but where, at the intreaty of her ſon,

ſon, ſhe has conſented to preſide. Heavens, what a feſtival! All the houſe ſeems in trouble, though many know not why, and particularly our ſweet innocent niece. Poor little Lucy is certainly, as Cornelia ſays, deeply enamoured of William; and we have, therefore, made a point of keeping her as much in the dark as poſſible. This circumſtance affects our tender Cornelia ſo much, that whenever ſhe ſpeaks to this ſweet girl, ſhe is ready to burſt into tears, yet contrives to conceal from her the real cauſe of her emotion.

I muſt not detain the meſſenger any longer, on account of the preſſing buſineſs of the loſt jewels; I will only add, that, diſtreſſed as I am, I will endeavour to draw ſome good out of evil, and if poſſible chear myſelf with the hope that this returning expreſs will bring me a better and a more ſpeedy account of your amendment in health than I ſhould otherwiſe have had. To hear that your diſorder has left you, or at leaſt is ſettled into the ſafeſt appearances, will, I aſſure you, be a very comfortable medicine, to the dejected ſpirits of

Your affectionate Siſter.

Our dear Frances ſalutes you with the fondeſt expreſſions of duty and affection.

LETTER LXV.

FROM CORNELIA TO EDMUND AUDLEY.

OH my very dear and excellent old friend! why are you not well, and with us, to make the happineſs of Cornelia complete?—Yes the happineſs of Cornelia!—You will leap for joy, in ſpite of the gout itſelf, at thoſe welcome words; and my letter, I am confident, will accelerate your recovery; for what cordial in the world is ſo powerful as unexpected generous joy to ſuch a warm and benevolent heart? Yes, my dear anxious Edmund, the diſtracted mother is made happy—happy for the firſt time in her life! happy to ſuch a degree as language is unable to expreſs! But you will gueſs at the exquiſite nature of my preſent ſenſations, when I tell you that I have recovered the alienated ſpirit of my ſon? He loves me; he obeys me; he will be every thing that I wiſh him to be; and the delight of all delights is, to be indebted, as I am for this unutterable bleſſing to the provident tenderneſs, to the godlike ſpirit, of our beloved Seymour!——Oh, Edmund! I am ſo wild with tranſport, that you will hardly underſtand perhaps what I write; yet I ſhould think myſelf an ungrateful wretch, if I did not attempt to

ſend

ſend you with my own hand a full hiſtory of the bleſſed change in my fate. I will begin where your ſiſter Lucy left off; for ſhe ſays ſhe diſpatched to you a ſad picture of me, reclining on my bed. I had reſted there about an hour quite alone, and felt my ſpirits a little compoſed by quiet and ſilent prayer; when I was agreeably ſurprized by your ſiſter, with my ſon William in one hand, and the loſt caſket in the other, followed by Giuliana, with her arm round the half reluctant Lucy the younger, who was afraid of intruding.

The warm-hearted and active Mount Maurice, being deeply touched by the ſweet Frances's lamentation for the loſs of the caſket, had ſet himſelf at day-break this morning to make a very laborious and patient ſearch to recover it, by examining a watery ditch by the ſide of the road, into which Frances imagines ſhe muſt have caſt it in her ſudden terror of its being cruſhed to pieces. When he returned in triumph with his treaſure, Giuliana particularly requeſted that the caſket might be opened immediately in my chamber, and only in the preſence of the few perſons whom I have mentioned. You, my dear Edmund, who have known all my fondneſs for our lamented friend, will eaſily conceive the emotions of my heart, when your ſiſter, as your repreſentative unlocked this ineſtimable caſket, and after taking out the rich jewels (which the young Lucy only was calm enough to admire) delivered two papers to my ſon; one of theſe appeared to be a letter directed to him, which Giuliana entreated him to read aloud. He did ſo; and here is a copy of what he read.

FROM SEYMOUR TO WILLIAM SIDLEY.

MY VERY DEAR YOUNG FRIEND,

I AM confident, from the endearing ſpirit of your childhood, that, at the period when I intend you ſhall receive this letter, you will be one of the moſt promiſing and accompliſhed characters of your time; I hope the ornament of your country, and, above all, the delight of your incomparable mother. At that period the hand which is now writing to you (though I am now but a few years older than you will then be) will be mouldered into duſt! My whole frame very ſenſibly feels the influence of approaching death; but my hand is yet guided by a heart that ſtill glows with a parental anxiety for your welfare, and with a moſt ardent wiſh to prove a valuable friend to you, even long after the cloſe of my exiſtence. You will be, my dear William, what I have been, a young man of a high ſpirit and keen affections, with an affluent fortune; and Heaven will, I truſt, preſerve you from what I conſider as the chief ſource of my misfortunes, the early loſs of an ineſtimable mother! You will, I hope, long have in yours a friend of the ſweet-

eſt

eſt manners, a counſellor of unqueſtionable integrity, a guide to whom all the great rulers of the human mind, reaſon and habit, religion and love, will conſpire, I am perſuaded, to render you obedient.

But, my dear William, perverſe incidents are very apt to ariſe in the life of a young man, which may tempt him, with the beſt heart in the world, to queſtion both the wiſdom and the authority even of ſuch a guide. The blind tyranny of an impetuous paſſion may hurry him into a frantic and reſolute oppoſition to this faithful and diſintereſted counſellor, whoſe precepts, his own conſcience will tell him, it is hardly poſſible to diſregard and be happy.

Oh, my dear Sedley, ſhould it be ever your lot to fall into circumſtances of this kind, before you take any deciſive ſtep, liſten, I conjure you, to me, repeatedly peruſe the papers I bequeath to you. Alas! who can be more qualified by experience than I am, to ſpeak as a monitor to any young man under the impulſe of a dangerous deſire; for whoſe paſſions have been more precipitate or more fatal than mine? But I mean not, my dear William, to give you a tedious ſermon on a hacknied ſubject, the blindneſs and the perils of youthful paſſion. I am the leſs diſpoſed to talk to you, my young friend, of ſuch perils, becauſe, if I have read your future character with a juſt prophetic eye, you will be as averſe as I have been to be influenced by the mere ſelfiſh motives of fear or caution. But you will poſſeſs a heart alive in the keeneſt degree to all the noble feelings of gratitude; and I am therefore moſt eager to tell you (what ſurely no one can tell you ſo

forcibly as myſelf) the rare, the ſuperlative claims of your angelic mother to the gratitude, the tenderneſs, the idolatry of her children.— You will have heard undoubtedly that in the richeſt bloom of her youth and beauty, when the tender affections of her feeling boſom had been awakened and quickened into the fondeſt attachment, ſhe had the reſolution to tear herſelf from the idol of her heart, and, allow my vanity to ſay, from an idol that few women could have relinquiſhed. She had the perſevering virtue to triumph over a paſſion that ſhe could hardly oppoſe, and live; and this ſhe accompliſhed, in ſpite of every remonſtrance, every entreaty, every ſtratagem, employed by the man ſhe loved to make her renounce a reſolution which tortured his heart as intenſely as it did her own. She was inflexible; ſhe was convinced that ſhe could not gratify her own ardent affection, without endangering the religious principles of her children; ſhe perferred their diſtant ſecurity to all the immediate allurements of fervent and reciproeal love. What ſtruggles, what agonies, ſhe endured; what admirable faculties, and what exquiſite virtue ſhe exerted in this conflict; you will perfectly underſtand, by reading the papers that you will find with this letter. They contain a long and very circumſtantial narrative of a trial perhaps the moſt ſevere that ever an impaſſioned woman ſuſtained. Oh, my dear William! ſhe loved me with an affection as fond, as vehement, as ſincere, as the female boſom can feel; but the love of her children, refined and ſtrengthened by her juſt attachment to God, was the predominant paſſion of her ſoul.—

What

What does a ſon owe to ſuch a mother? Your own generous heart will anſwer, undoubtedly, "a life of the fondeſt veneration, and the moſt devoted obedience." Oh, my dear William! were it poſſible for a precipitate paſſion to hurry you towards a marriage which would render this incomparable parent unhappy; you muſt be the moſt unfeeling and moſt ungrateful of beings to complete it. You could not do ſo; or, if you could in the delirium of deſire, as ſoon as that ſubſided, you muſt grow an object of abhorrence to yourſelf, and of pity, if not of deteſtation, to all the world.

But let me baniſh theſe painful and diſtreſſing images—let me chear my exhauſted ſpirits by a proſpect which time, I flatter myſelf, will moſt happily realize. It is my hope and my perſuaſion, that this letter will find you, my dear William, in domeſtic comfort, joy, and harmony, with that angelic parent to whom you are ſo deeply indebted; yes, as my life is ebbing faſt away, I ſeem to be bleſt with a clear prophetic viſion of thoſe ſweet ſcenes of family concord and delight which I moſt fervently wiſh my deareſt friends to enjoy, and which Heaven, I am confident, reſerves as a reward for the moſt meritorious of women. Your excellent mother, my dear William, will naturally wiſh you to marry early in life. Allow me the privilege of decorating your bride with jewels that belonged to a woman of beauty and of virtue. I had once vainly hoped to place them on the more lovely perſon of my adored Cornelia! Thoſe hopes are paſt. Let me now pleaſe myſelf with the idea that her hand may place them as a nup-

tial ornament on ſome fortunate fair, as lovely, if poſſible, in your eyes, my dear William, as the perfect Cornelia was in mine. But remember, it is the requeſt of your dying friend, that theſe jewels may never decorate any bride of yours, however beautiful, if ſhe wants the noble ornament of my Cornelia's eſteem and affection. Ah! how vain is this charge! What mother can be ſo tenderly diſpoſed towards a daughter, as our gentle Cornelia will be towards any lovely girl that you can think worthy to be your wife? Her judgment and her tenderneſs can never be corrupted by any ſordid motives of avarice or ambition; and ſhe is, therefore, peculiarly entitled to be your prime counſellor in this moſt important article of human life. O! my dear William, may you be happy in your choice! You can hardly be otherwiſe, if you have the ſanction of that invaluable parent, who is at once a perfect judge and a conſummate model of female lovelineſs and perfection. Build your happineſs on hers; make her the architect and the partner of your felicity; be to her, I entreat you, the attentive, obedient, and grateful ſon, which ſhe has ſo ſingularly deſerved to find you; and may your virtues and your happineſs long and amply reward her for all ſhe has ſuffered from the hapleſs but not ungenerous love ſtill glowing in the heart which, while the ſhadows of death are hovering over it, thus anxiouſly folds you to itſelf in a paternal embrace, and begs you to remember with tenderneſs

Your moſt affectionate

SEYMOUR.

I will

I will not attempt, my dear Edmund, to deſcribe to you our various emotions while this letter was read. I will only ſay, that my dear feeling William ſoon found his voice falter. Giuliana offered to relieve him. He declined her aſſiſtance; and continued to read, but could not advance without frequent pauſes. At one paſſage, which you will eaſily gueſs, he terrified me by ſtarting up abruptly to quit the room; but he ſaid in a tremulous tone as he went out, "I will return in a few minutes." Theſe minutes were dreadfully long; a thouſand terrors, mixt with a gleam of the brighteſt hope, darted acroſs my mind in this affecting interval. He had the letter in his hand, and the paper annexed to it, which proved to be a full narrative of all that paſſed in the houſe of my good old friend Mr. Danvers.

My ſon did not return to us, as he afterwards confeſſed, till he had peruſed this paper; and the effects of it on his heart and mind were as full and forcible as our infinitely dear and provident Seymour could have wiſhed them to be.

That animated ſweetneſs and benignity which you have often admired in the countenance of my dear William, but which for ſome days had utterly diſappeared, was viſible again when he re-entered my chamber, where the little party remained in almoſt breathleſs expectation of his return. Seating himſelf by my ſide, he ſeized my hand, and kiſſed it as he began to read the following words, "But let us baniſh theſe painful and diſtreſſing images," &c.

He concluded the letter in a very audible, uninterrupted voice, but not without dropping tears on the cloſe of it. Then throwing himſelf into my

my arms with an air of unutterable tenderneſs, he exclaimed, "Deareſt and moſt admirable of parents, you have not ſuffered in vain; I feel the hand of Heaven itſelf, in the wondrous co-incidence of theſe dying admonitions, and the perilous folly of your ſon. Oh generous Seymour, thou wert indeed inſpired by the ſpirit of heavenly benevolence. Oh, that thou couldeſt have lived to have directed! But I will yet obey thee as my father. Take my dear Madam, take to your own boſom theſe invaluable memorials of your unexampled merit, and let them be the pledges of my unlimited obedience. Yes, moſt perfect and moſt beloved of mothers, it ſhall be the chief pride of my life to be fully ſenſible of your perfection, and to comply with all your deſires."

Oh, my dear Edmund! I could make no anſwer to my child but by folding him to my heart. My voice was utterly drowned, and the tears of the two Lucys were almoſt as abundant and overwhelming as mine. Our dear and more ſpirited Giuliana did not weep; but her keen eyes flaſhed with a kind of fiery exultation and with that livelineſs of geſture which is peculiar to herſelf, ſhe caught William in her arms, and kiſſed him; ſaying, "Now indeed you are the true ſon of our Cornelia; but come, you have done but half your duty; I muſt teach you the reſt." We all gazed upon her with aſtoniſhment, and were utterly at a loſs to conceive her meaning; but ſhe ſoon explained herſelf by new and ſignificant geſtures. Taking a very beautiful croſs from the jewels that lay before us ſhe ſlipt a little ſilk cord into the loop at the top of it, and having rapidly faſtened it on the neck

neck of your niece, ſhe exclaimed, "Here, William, is the only girl in the world to whom theſe jewels can properly belong. Lucy, having been trained, like yourſelf, by your incomparable mother, is the only perſon alive who can love you both as you both deſerve to be loved." I confeſs to you, my dear Edmund, that I was both pleaſed and frightened by this rapturous and almoſt indiſcreet ſally in our dear warm-hearted Giuliana. But ſhe has ſince truly ſaid to me, that ſhe is no bad judge of the human heart; and ſhe felt it was a moment when a bold ſtroke in a young maiden's favour might be ſafely taken. The dear modeſt Lucy was indeed d ſtreſſed by the ſpeech, and was covered with thoſe eloquent bluſhes that ſay a great deal to an intelligent heart. My ſon, with very tender gallantry, kiſſed both the croſs and the damſel, exclaiming, "If my ſweet couſin can really love me as a huſband, let her join me in vowing implicit obedience to this beſt of parents." "Oh! replied the poor Lucy (with a moſt maidenly embarraſſment), that is a vow I have ſufficiently made already." "But you will not (cried William, with a kind of half-jealous quickneſs, that I own delighted me), you will not, my dear Lucy, refuſe to renew ſuch a vow at my requeſt." "Moſt aſſuredly not," ſaid the ſweet girl with more courage. And here I folded them both to my boſom, and put an end to a converſation that I now thought it prudent to check, by entreating William to call his brother, that I might make him and all our gueſts below immediate partakers of my felicity.

Our

Our feſtival, though it began in the moſt gloomy manner, has thus, my dear Edmund, proved a day of cordial delight, which wanted only your preſence to render it complete. In ſome meaſure, however, I ſeem to have had you preſent in your lovely daughter, who is univerſally admired, and particularly by one gentleman to whom I confeſs myſelf partial: but Louiſa charges me not to ſpeak on this ſubject, as ſhe ſays it belongs to her; and ſhe threatens to come and talk to you in perſon. I have now been chatting to you a great part of the night. No great ſacrifice, believe me; for I am much too much elevated in ſpirits to go ſoon to ſleep, though my gueſts, after the happy feſtivity of the evening, are gone peaceably to their pillows. I ſhall diſpatch this to you by an expreſs before the break of day, not only from my eagerneſs to compenſate for all the pain I have given you, by admitting you as ſpeedily as poſſible to your due ſhare in my preſent happineſs; but to receive, I hope, a moſt favourable as well as ſpeedy account of your returning health. Adieu! A thouſand kind wiſhes ſalute you from this houſe, and particularly from the grateful heart of

Your affectionate and happy

CORNELIA.

Colonel Moreton, who arrived here to dinner, ſays he was a ſchool-fellow of your's, and that he longs to renew his acquaintance with you.

LETTER.

LETTER LXVI.

FROM LUCY AUDLEY TO HER BROTHER EDMUND.

MY VERY DEAR BROTHER

THE excellent account which you have been ſo good as to give me of yourſelf has ſet my heart quite at reſt. I was very uneaſy about you, in ſpite of the gaiety here; but now I am all peace and exultation. The delicious ſcene of domeſtic harmony and happineſs before me has made me quite young again; and as I have wiſely reſolved not to fall in love any more for myſelf, I have actually fallen in love for your daughter. Seriouſly, I am perſuaded that you will find the frank and pleaſant Mount Maurice a huſband not unworthy of our dear Frances. They ſeem to be in a very fair way of being ſufficiently pleaſed with each other. Now do not, with your uſual quickneſs of parental anxiety, order a chaiſe, and, gouty as you are, poſt away to Sedley-Hall. No, my dear Edmund, you may truſt me, you know, for a Duenna, the only part that I am now fit to play. In ſober truth, you muſt not come hither, though you

you ſeem to hint at ſuch a deſign.—Why ſo pray?—Well, do not be alarmed—the real reaſon is, becauſe the whole party here have it in agitation to ſurprize you with a viſit; to aſk your bleſſing, to be ſure, &c. &c.

Our enchanting young hoſt here declares, that he conſiders it as a point of duty, honour, and gratitude, to accept your friendly invitation; and that he is bound in perſon to reſtore your lovely daughter to the father who was ſo kind as to indulge us all with her ſweet ſociety at ſuch a time. It was indeed very good in you; and we are all grateful. Heaven will reward you, if I prophecy aright, by providing here juſt ſuch a ſon-in-law for you as I have often heard you wiſh to find. Truſt me, Mount Maurice is perfectly cured of his furious paſſion for Emily; and, as he juſtly obſerved to me, a little taſte of true virtuous delight is ſufficient to wean an honeſt heart from licentious allurements. He does however great juſtice to many ſingular good qualities in poor Emily; and frankly confeſſes, that he once fooliſhly offered an immenſe ſum to purchaſe her favours without ſucceeding.—William has written to her; and ſent her a very elegant preſent, with which his mother ſupplied him, being charmed, as ſhe told me, with the ſpirit and delicacy of his letter. I was delighted as ſhe was, by his amiable ingenuouſneſs, in giving her a ſight of this letter. He has juſt received poor Emily's reply. Cornelia brought it to me this moment; and, as ſhe knows your ſecrecy, allows me to tranſcribe it.

'To WILLIAM SEDLEY.

'YOUR delicate and tender farewell, my very dear Sedley, has only told me what my own reflections had told me more cruelly before; for, believe me,

"These are counſellors
"That feeling perſuade me what I am."

'The dream of my fondeſt ambition, which ſuggeſted my laſt letter to you, diſſolved of itſelf, when I reflected more on the character of your incomparable mother. Pray tell her, my love for you is ſo genuine, that your letter, though it coſt me many tears, gave me more ſatisfaction than ſorrow. Ah, Sedley! this is a ſevere, but a perfect teſt of my ſincerity. Our deſtinies call us different ways. You are haſtening, I hope, to domeſtic harmony and delight; I, to magnificence and diſguſt. Yet I cannot be completely wretched, if I hear you are happy; and I ſhall feel a ſpark of honeſt pride in my boſom, if your angelic parent (who is better known to me, perhaps, than you ſuppoſe her to be) can add a little portion of her eſteem to that tender pity with which I am confident ſhe will often think on the ill-fated

'EMILY BELMONT.

'Your elegant little preſent I accept with 'humble gratitude, from the endearing cir-'cumſtance which you tell me concerning it. 'I dare not ſay more.—Adieu for ever.'

And now, my dear ſuſpicious Edmund, I know you will think Cornelia and me little better than a couple of watery-eyed ſimpletons, when I tell you we wept in concert over this little billet, and gave the writer full credit for the ſincerity of her affection.

But we will talk no more of ſuch perſonages. Thank Heaven, the period is now come, for which we have ſo often and ſo ardently prayed. I ſee the heart of our incomparable friend as full of delight as we have formerly ſeen it of affliction. I need not tell you, that I take a moſt lively ſhare (who does not?) in her tranſport. After bitter apprehenſions of finding myſelf a falſe prophet, I exult at length in the veracity of my prediction; and with a delightful confidence I go on to propheſy, that I ſhall have the cordial ſatisfaction of ſeeing both our matchleſs Cornelia and my dear Edmund very thoroughly rewarded for every paſt ſuffering in the happy marriage and future permanent happineſs of their children. The proſpect for both is as fair as we can wiſh it to be; and I boldly foretell, that the event in each caſe will be of the ſame charming complexion.

Pray, as I have not the youth and beauty of a Caſſandra, let me have the comfort of having my

my prophecies believed; and believe me alſo, on every occaſion,

Your faithful and affectionate

LUCY.

Our dear Fanny ſpeaks for herſelf in a ſeparate letter.

THE Editor has only to acquaint his benevolent reader, who may wiſh to know whether the friendly Lucy was a true propheteſs or not, that her prediction in the laſt letter was verified completely.

Cornelia is at this time among the happieſt of human beings, and a ſingular example how a fond and tender ſpirit, that has ſtruggled meritoriouſly through the tempeſts of early paſſion, may enjoy a delicious ſerenity in the evening of life. She is ſurrounded by a numerous and beautiful groupe of her deſcendants, of whom ſhe is ſtill the idol and the director. While ſhe ſhares in all their innocent and lively pleaſures, ſhe is particularly careful to animate and fortify the young mind with a ſeaſonable and deep ſenſe of Religion. She conſiders this both as the ſole ſecurity and prime ornament of a rational being. She eſteems it the only ſource of permanent ſatisfaction.

She

She has a peculiar delight in deriving every bleſſing ſhe enjoys from the religious purity of her own maternal conduct, and from the provident devout tenderneſs of the man ſhe loved, to whoſe memory her heart has been inviolably faithful.

FINIS.